

work, the arrival of People's Commissar of Health Semashko could just as easily be associated with the need to establish sanitary business in the First Cavalry. Finally, Kalinin's arrival also, in its own way, fit into the logic of supply problems. An old friend of the Cavalry, which Budyonny specifically emphasized, and, more importantly, the formal head of the Soviet government, could help a lot with supplying the Cavalry with everything necessary. In any case, Semyon Mikhailovich tried to convince his readers that Mikhail Ivanovich had come to the First Cavalry precisely for this. And, of course, to speak at rallies in front of the fighters, to tell them about the latest news of domestic and foreign policy. In fact, the commission came first of all to remove chips from the Revolutionary Military Council of the Cavalry and outline the contours of the future trial and reprisals against those convicted of banditry. That's what the People's Commissar of Justice needed. And the actual head of the commission was not Kalinin, but Kamenev, the only full member of the Politburo of all the members of the commission (Kalinin was only a candidate then). Therefore, it was the opinion of Lev Borisovich in Moscow that was decisive for the fate of the leadership of the Cavalry. But the clouds over Budyonny and Voroshilov dissipated, their actions were generally recognized as correct, the responsibility for the excesses of the Cavalrymen was shifted to the lower link and the mythical "White Guard agents".

Meanwhile, the leadership of the Red Army was very worried about the state of the First Cavalry, which was to become the main striking force in the decisive offensive against Wrangel. In the report of the political administration of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic for June-October 1920, it was especially emphasized that "the Budennovites, who replaced the Red Army units, marked their arrival with pogroms." As a result, the population "is frightened by the raids and debauches of our

cavalry, but in their hearts they are so embittered that the rear is unreliable and poses a serious threat to the army." In this regard, the commander of the Southern Front, M.V. Frunze,

wrote to Lenin about the need to "take urgent measures to put the First Cavalry Arm

for our peace of mind in the near future." It is significant that even during the period of the Polish campaign, V. I. Lenin conveyed through Berzin to the RVS of the Southwestern Front a convincing request: "Do not make a legendary hero out of Budyonny and do not praise him as a personality in the press ... since this has a very detrimental effect on him ". How Ilyich looked into the water! As of October 2, 1920, the First Cavalry Army had 1,577 commanding officers, 13,967 cavalry soldiers, 2,621 infantrymen, 34,500 horses, 58 guns, 260 machine guns, three armored trains, one armored car, three armored detachments and 20 aircraft. But in October alone, 1,200 fighters deserted from the First Cavalry. And a few thousand more, reduced to marching regiments, were recognized as not quite reliable. But all the same, the Cavalry, replenished with people and horses, provided with food, fodder and ammunition, was a formidable force. That's just the spirit of most of the fighters was no longer the same as, say, at the beginning of the Polish campaign. And not so many cavalymen returned from this campaign. So, after the end of the struggle with Poland, the Cavalry was thrown against Wrangel. Not without difficulties associated with the decomposition of individual units, Budyonny's soldiers arrived on the Southern Front - for the last decisive battle of the Civil War. After the defeat near Warsaw, Lenin and Trotsky sought to make peace with the Poles and quickly put an end to the white army. Commander-in-Chief S. S. Kamenev also realized the hopelessness of waging war with Poland. On October 12, 1920, on the day the Soviet-Polish truce came into force, he proposed to the Politburo to throw all their forces against the Wrangel army in the Crimea, arguing that the Red Army was still unable to fight against Poland at the moment: "... We we cannot count on the fact that before the elimination of Wrangel, we will be able, continuing the fight against him, to devote such forces and means to the West in order to restore our combat power there in a short time to a level that guarantees us success in the fight against the Poles, if only they broke the terms of the truce ... A sharp massing of forces and means is necessary against one of the ... opponents, and precisely against Wrangel, due to the genera

there is a certain risk due to the weakening of our forces in the west, but even with a half-hearted solution, this risk cannot be sufficiently eliminated either, since there is no certainty that, simultaneously with the struggle in the south, we will be able to give funds to the west for the full restoration of his power. The conclusion of the armistice with Poland was preceded by Trotsky's visit to the headquarters of the Western Front. Lev Davydovich described this visit as follows: "Our armies rolled back four hundred or more kilometers. After yesterday's brilliant victories, no one wanted to put up with this. Returning from the Wrangel front, I found in Moscow a mood in favor of a second Polish war. Now Rykov, too, has moved to another camp. "Once we started," he said, "we must finish." The command of the Western Front was reassuring: enough reinforcements arrived, artillery was updated, etc. Desire was the father of thought. "What do we have on the Western Front? I objected. - Morally broken shots, which are now poured with raw human dough. It is impossible to fight with such an army. Or rather, with such an army one can still somehow defend oneself, retreating and preparing a second army in the rear, but it is senseless to think that such an army can again rise in a victorious offensive along a path littered with its own debris. I declared that repeating the mistake already committed would cost us ten times more and that I would not submit to the impending decision, but would appeal to the Party. Although Lenin formally defended the continuation of the war, but without the confidence and perseverance that for the first time. My invincible conviction of the need to conclude peace, however difficult, made a proper impression on him. He suggested postponing the solution of the question until I had gone to the Western Front and had a direct impression of the state of our armies after the rollback. This meant to me that Lenin, in essence, was already joining my position. At the headquarters of the front, I found moods in favor of a second war. But there was no certainty in these sentiments: they were a reflection of Moscow sentiments. The lower I went down the military ladder - through the army to the division, regiment and

company, the clearer it became the impossibility of an offensive war. I sent Lenin a letter on this subject, written by hand, without even making a copy for myself, and I myself went on a further detour. Two or three days spent at the front were quite enough to confirm the conclusion with which I arrived at the front. I returned to Moscow, and the Politburo almost unanimously ruled in favor of the immediate conclusion of peace.

Poland also strove for peace. Her troops advanced far to the east. In front of them were the demoralized remnants of the defeated armies of the Western Front, who received raw, untrained and not quite politically reliable, given the dissatisfaction of the peasantry with the surplus appropriation, replenishment. In addition, the Red Army was in full measure the army of the Civil War. Such a heavy defeat, which happened near Warsaw, thoroughly undermined her spirit. The defeat in the Neman battle following the Battle of Warsaw, as a result of which the Soviet troops rolled back behind Minsk, confirmed this. A further offensive by the Poles threatened that the Red Army would turn into a disorderly flight. In fact, the path to Smolensk and Moscow was open for the Polish army. However, the autumn thaw was approaching and the war threatened to drag on. Most importantly, the Poles were not at all eager to capture Moscow for General Wrangel. As Piłsudski wrote as early as the beginning of 1919: "Perhaps I could have reached Moscow and driven the Bolsheviks out of there. But then what?.. They have a lot of space. And I will not remake Moscow either in London or in Warsaw. Only, apparently, I will avenge my gymnasium youth in Vilna and order them

to write on the walls of the Kremlin: "It is forbidden to speak Russian" ... "The main reasons that forced Poland to stop the successfully developing war with Soviet Russia for it lay not in the military, but in a purely political plane. The complete defeat of the Red Army brought Wrangel to power in the Kremlin, who still did not even recognize Polish independence. And there was no certainty that, having strengthened his internal position, the baron would



confrontation with Soviet Russia, which sought to ignite the flames of a proletarian revolution around the world, Poland could count on the help of the Entente powers, then if Wrangel, a supporter of "one and indivisible Russia", came to power in Moscow, Pilsudski could no longer rely on the Anglo-French support of the Polish independence, wish the Russian "white" government to restore some form of control over Poland. The "head of the Polish state" clearly considered the Bolsheviks, who at one time declared the recognition of Poland's independence, a lesser evil in comparison with Denikin, Kolchak and Wrangel.

Probably, a way out could be found if the same Wrangel recognized the independence of Poland and Ukraine. In fact, Pilsudski started a war with Soviet Russia in order to create a Ukrainian state independent of Moscow. Then a sufficiently strong "buffer" was created between Russia and Poland, and Warsaw could feel guaranteed against Moscow's assassination attempts. However, there was no hope that Wrangel would recognize Petliura's Directory. So, it did not make sense to carry chestnuts from the fire with Polish hands for the Russian White Guards. Thus, the fate of Wrangel was decided, although he still tried to advance behind the Dnieper and in mid-August he landed troops in the Kuban. However, the Zadneprovskaya operation of the Russian army failed even before the arrival of the First Cavalry. As for the Kuban landing of Colonel Ulagai, he, having failed to raise the bulk of the Cossacks to fight, returned ingloriously to the Crimea at the end of August. These failures, according to Wrangel, greatly undermined the morale of his troops. Here the adventurism inherent in the "black baron" affected. When, by the end of September, it became clear to him that the Poles did not intend to continue the fight and it would not be possible to negotiate with them, it was necessary not to start the Zadneprovsky operation four days before the signing of the Soviet-Polish truce, but to immediately withdraw all troops to the Crimea. But Pyotr Nikolaevich was primarily a military professional, and this professionalism played a cruel joke on him. Like a

liquidate the Kakhovka bridgehead. In his memoirs, he motivated the decision to stay in Northern Tavria, despite reliable information about the approach of large Red forces from the Western Front, by the need to wait for the harvest in order to take grain to the Crimea. But, firstly, it is far from certain that the peasants would give their grain to the whites retreating to the Crimea for meaningless pieces of paper. Secondly, if necessary, one could hope to get bread from abroad. It is unlikely that the same France would have allowed a humanitarian catastrophe in the Crimea if the whites had to stay there for the winter of 1920. As a result, Wrangel put the Russian army in Northern Tavria under attack by four times the enemy's superior forces and lost any possibility of holding the Crimea for a long time. Of course, by October 1920, even the most combat-ready Soviet units were very tired of the war, which we saw in the example of the First Cavalry. But Wrangel's troops were far from in the best condition, having suffered defeat beyond the Dnieper and in the Kuban, and after the Soviet-Polish truce, they finally lost faith in victory. For this reason, Wrangel failed to use a number of mistakes of the Soviet command during the operation in Northern Tavria and later, during the assault on the Crimean fortifications. White no longer thought about how to break at least individual parts of the enemy, but about a speedy retreat. Among the Soviet military leaders there was no unity about exactly how best to defeat Wrangel. On October 26, 1920, the commander of the Southern Front, M.V. Frunze, "for the personal information of the commanders" sent out directive No. 0163. It said: "I set the armies of the front the task of defeating Wrangel's army, preventing it from retreating to the Crimean peninsula and capturing the isthmuses. In pursuance of this general task, the right-bank army must cut off the enemy's retreat to the Crimea and, by advancing to the East, defeat Wrangel's reserves in the Melitopol region. On this occasion, Budyonny stated in his memoirs: "It was necessary first of all to liquidate the Melitopol group. Otherwise, the enemy, leaning to the

parts through Perekop and Crimea and cut them off. Will close the gate. It was also alarming that during the siege of Perekop by us, Wrangel could strike at the rear of our units. With the support of Voroshilov, Budyonny sent his plan to Lenin, commander-in-chief Kamenev, the Revolutionary Military Council of the republic and Commander Frunze. According to the Budyonnovsk adjutant and biographer A. M. Zolototrubov, "Budyonny informed V. I. Lenin and M. V. Frunze that Directive No. , is completely silent about operations on the peninsula itself. And the offensive of the armies at different times will give the enemy the opportunity to beat our forces in parts. In addition, the isolation of the 2nd Cavalry Army from the main flank groups deprives the latter of strong support in the form of these armies and exposes it to the risk of remaining inactive or being defeated. The enemy, of course, has strong reserves in the Crimea, which provide the defense of the fortified isthmus, and, if successful, can reinforce the necessary sector and complete the operation. "Therefore," Budyonny wrote, "for my part, I would have thought: 1) to begin the operation on October 31, 1920 and simultaneously along the entire front, having a free strong front reserve; 2) to concentrate the 2nd Cavalry Army at the time of the offensive near Berislav for joint operations of the 1st, 2nd and 6th armies; 3) for greater success in the operations of the entire cavalry, it is absolutely necessary to unite the cavalry units under one common

command;

4) our second fist should be concentrated approximately in the region of Bolshaya and Malaya Mikhailovka, on the coast we need to have a cavalry group of up to three cavalry divisions. The exact operational tasks of the right and our groups are to destroy the enemy grouping between Perekop and the Dnieper with a coordinated strike. The 6th Army, having placed two divisions in the Kalanchaki-Oskazhidnov region, breaks into the peninsula with the rest of the forces on the shoulders of the enemy. If successful, following the 6th, two more divisions rush to reinforce. All the rest

cavalry, after the destruction of the enemy's Perekop group, strike in the direction of Melitopol in order to cut off the enemy's retreat to Sivash and destroy manpower. Our right group with swift concentric blows to assist the left group, acting in the direction of Melitopol. These are the considerations that, in accordance with the duty of revolutionary conscience, I considered it necessary to bring to your attention. "Budyonny also asked

that the 1st Cavalry Army be subordinated not to the command of the Southern Front, but directly to the Commander-in-Chief of the Republic. However, this request was ignored. In addition, from a member The Revolutionary Military Council of the Southern Front, S. I. Gusev, received information that "the divisions of the 1st Cavalry are passing through Ukraine, wreaking not only cruel expropriations, but also a Black Hundred pogrom." over the head of the front are completely unacceptable in normal armed forces, especially in combat conditions. However, during the Civil War, as we have seen earlier, such disputes arose repeatedly in the Red Army, and the parties appealed not only to the military authorities, but also to the highest party. However, the same discussion of combat orders was perhaps even more widely practiced by the Whites. The same Wrangel argued with Denikin more than once and actually did not fulfill some of his orders, including during the retreat of the Volunteer Army after the failure of the general offensive against Moscow. But among the Bolsheviks, Lenin and Trotsky still in all cases were able to force their subordinates to adhere to a single line of warfare, but Kolchak and Denikin did not succeed, especially during the period of defeat. On October 23, Commander-in-Chief Kamenev, who was in Kharkov, at the headquarters of the Southern Front, received a telegram from Budyonny, in turn telegraphed Trotsky to Moscow: "Without going into consideration of the plan submitted by Comrade Budyonny, I request to propose to the Revolutionary Military Council of the First Cavalry Army no deadlines

appoint, but firmly adhere to the date determined by Comrade Frunze, namely October 28. Trotsky and Lenin agreed with Kamenev. On October 24, Lenin telegraphed the Revolutionary Military Council of the First Cavalry: "Wrangel is clearly delaying his units. It is possible that he is already trying to hide in the Crimea. To miss it would be the greatest crime. The success of the upcoming strike largely depends on the 1st Cavalry. I propose to the RVS of the 1st Cavalry to use the most heroic measures to speed up the concentration of

the 1st Cavalry." Frunze rejected Budyonny's plan, among other things, because he was in a hurry to finish off Wrangel before winter and did not want to even postpone the offensive for three days. The front commander was afraid that during this time the enemy would have time to withdraw from Northern Tavria beyond the Crimean isthmuses. But in fact, Wrangel was arrogantly going to give the Reds a battle on the outskirts of the Crimea, hoping to keep at least part of Northern Tavria and at least hold out there for so long to have time to collect and take the new crop to the Crimea. In principle, Wrangel, if he really wanted to retreat to the Crimea without losses, as we have already noted, he should have done it immediately after the news of the conclusion of the Soviet-Polish truce, and, in any case, after the collapse of the Zadneprovskaya operation. However, the "black baron" was too confident in his abilities. And since he had not yet begun to withdraw by October 25, it means that he was preparing to fight in Northern Tavria, counting on success in a maneuverable struggle. Probably, Pyotr Nikolaevich still harbored some hopes that the Red Army could be, if not

defeated, then at least severely battered in the steppes of Northern Tavria. Of course, Budyonny's plan was largely dictated by his rivalry with Mironov. Semyon Mikhailovich, not without reason, expected that if the entire cavalry was united under the command of one commander, then the command would be entrusted to him, as he was more proven and loyal to the communists. In addition, he expected to win three more days to concentrate and put in order the First Cavalry, which, judging by Gusev's telegram, was still far from having outlived the pogrom mood. But, regardl

recognize that the plan of the Revolutionary Military Council of the First Cavalry, developed by Budyonny, Voroshilov and the new chief of staff G. I. Letsky, who replaced Zotov, had a much better chance of defeating the Whites in Northern Tavia than the Frunze plan. The red cavalry, concentrated in one powerful fist, would certainly have surpassed the Wrangel cavalry, had every chance of defeating it and preventing the main forces of the Russian army from retreating to the Crimea. In this case, the First and Second Cavalry Armies would closely cooperate from the very beginning of the offensive and would have every chance to occupy the isthmuses and cut off Wrangel's retreat to the Crimea. The simultaneous offensive of all Soviet armies would not allow Wrangel to maneuver with

his own forces and beat the enemy in parts. It is no coincidence that in the three-volume book "Civil War. 1918–1921" was admitted:

"The command of the 1st Cavalry Army (Budyonny, Voroshilov) proposed to the command of the Southern Front ... a more decisive plan for the operational use of the 1st Cavalry Army.

According to this proposal, the Cavalry Army was to break through the Salkovsky Isthmus to the Crimea and intercept the retreat of Wrangel's army from the south. This plan was rejected by both the command of the Southern Front and the High Command. At the present time, when historians have materials characterizing the state of the rear of the Whites and the grouping of their forces by the beginning of the decisive actions of the Red Army, one cannot but admit that the most daring and risky plan of the command of the Cavalry Army in those conditions could

give absolutely exceptional results. But the Soviet side then, I repeat, did not know Wrangel's plans and feared that he would have time to retreat to the Crimea even before the start of the offensive. Although it is unlikely that the baron would have managed to do this for those three additional days that Budyonny's plan gave him. After all, intelligence did not reveal any signs of preparations for the departure of the Whites from Northern Tavia. It is also worth noting that Budyonny's plan did not contain any particular risk, given the fourfold numerical superiority of the Soviet troops over the Russian army. On the contrary, it was much less risky than F

Budyonny, all armies were to advance in close cooperation with each other, and both cavalry armies generally had a single command. As a result, it would not have happened, as happened in reality during the implementation of the Frunze plan, that the Wrangelites were able to successively attack first the First and then the Second Cavalry Armies, inflicting heavy losses on them. On October 28, 1920, the Red offensive began in Northern Tavria. As the Soviet military historian N. E. Kakurin wrote, "the forces of both sides by the time the decisive battle began in Northern Tavria were calculated: Soviet troops (IV, VI, XIII, I and II cavalry armies) - 133 thousand bayonets and sabers with 500 guns (in addition, 17 armored trains, 31 armored vehicles, 29 airplanes); enemy forces - 37,220 bayonets and sabers with 213 guns (in addition, 6 armored trains, 18 armored vehicles and 8 aviation detachments); thus, the Red troops outnumbered the enemy four times in terms of manpower and more than twice in terms of artillery. Nevertheless, the battle immediately took on a fierce character. The transition of the

First Cavalry Army of Budyonny to the left bank of the Dnieper was carried out early in the morning on October 28. The 6th and 11th cavalry divisions made up the Northern, and the 4th and 14th - the Southern group. The northern group stood in the way of the enemy's retreat, and the southern group went out to the isthmus, blocking his path to the Crimea. The next day, the horsemen occupied the Askania-Nova reserve, blocking Wrangel's path to the Crimea. However, after fierce fighting, Wrangel was able to break through to the peninsula. The commander and commissar of the 11th Cavalry Division F.K. Morozov and P.V. Bakhturov

died in the battles. The Cavalry suffered the heaviest losses in its history. Budyonny wrote in his memoirs: "When the White troops began to retreat, the outcome of the battle, its success, to a large extent became directly dependent on the actions of the 2nd Cavalry Army. On October 29, she was given the task of breaking through to Serogozy at all costs, together with the 6th and 1st Cavalry armies, to surround the enemy's most powerful strike force here, including such mobile units as Barbovich's cavalry corps and the

the group was the most dangerous. Under no circumstances should she be let out of the Serogoz region.

Now, more than ever, decisiveness was required in actions, it was necessary to show maximum initiative and attack, attack, regardless of any difficulties, crash into enemy groups, dissect them, surround them, destroy them piece by piece. Then Wrangel would have been clamped in an iron vise and broken. But, unfortunately, the enemy managed to tie down the actions of the 2nd Cavalry Army, the battle at the Nikopol bridgehead dragged on. In addition to F.K. Mironov, Budyonny blamed the command of the 4th and 13th armies for delaying the offensive, which was not active enough and allowed Wrangel to withdraw from the Melitopol direction and transfer three divisions against the First Cavalry. Frunze was also worried about the situation, and on October 30 he ordered both armies to vigorously move forward. When Voroshilov informed Budyonny about this, he shook his head: "Too late,

Kliment Efremovich. Now the entire avalanche of White Guard troops will have to be held back by our army. And he was right: "The situation was heating up every hour. The columns of the enemy, retreating from the areas of Serogoz and Agaiman, collapsed in the Novo-Alekseevka area on the 4th Cavalry Division. The battle ensued fierce. Armored trains of the whites were moving along the railway track, firing grape shots, and dense chains of officer regiments were moving to the right and left of the embankment. The 3rd Cavalry Brigade found itself in a particularly difficult situation, having to fight its way through literally between enemy columns. Commander 4 S. K. Timoshenko himself several times in the ranks of horsemen rushed into counterattacks. He was wounded twice, but continued to lead the battle. The division withstood the pressure of the whites. In battles, the red cavalry killed many enemy soldiers, within two days they captured

up to 2 thousand prisoners, including 15 officers. At the same time, the 14th Cavalry Division of A. Ya. Parkhomenko was subjected to fierce attacks in the Rozhdestvenka area. Whites attacked her from three sides. All day on October 31 and until the evening of November 1, the divi



the desperate pressure of the Wrangelites. Only by the end of the day on November 1, she left the battle and concentrated in the Novo-Troitskoye area. An even more brutal battle took place on October 31 in Otrada. It

should be told in more detail. After the first day of the offensive, the field-army of the 1st Cavalry and the Special Cavalry Brigade, on my instructions, settled in Otrada. This settlement, 200-300 households, occupied an important key position in relation to Chongar and Genichesk. A good country road passed through its center. The village was on a hill. The steppe stretched far from it, which made it possible to conduct a circular view.

Looking ahead, I'll say that it was precisely thanks to this that when hordes of Wrangel's troops attacked Otrada from Northern Tavia, we were able to detect enemy troops far on the way to the village and prepare for battle in time. In a word, Otrada was in all respects an advantageous site. From here it was easier for me to lead the divisions during the battles ... .. The telephone set beeped. I pick up the

phone. Anxiety! Whites broke through to the village. The regiments of the Special Brigade occupied their starting position. I went outside. They gave me a horse. I don't see Voroshilov. I go back to the hut. Kliment Efremovich

is sitting at the table and wielding a needle. "I found the time,"

I say. - Drop it! - What happened? he asks calmly. - The whites are near! - Well, let. Once they come, we will meet as agreed. Now

I'll put my overcoat in order and ... -

Faster, - I start to get angry. - Where is the rush? he laughs.

Kliment Efremovich was an extremely brave man. His disdain for danger sometimes went beyond the usual notions of bravery. He literally played with death. For this reason, more than once fell into heavy

bindings and miraculously remained intact. I told Voroshilov

that I would go to the Special Brigade, and I asked him to organize

people here. It is necessary to put on horseback everyone who can only wield a s

When I rode to the Special Brigade, Stepnoy-Spizharny had already deployed regiments for battle. The commander of the 1st regiment, Goryachev, led his horsemen to the windmill - northwest of Otrada, built the front

to the north. The 2nd regiment covered the battery. In the distance, against the background of the still bright horizon, masses of whites approaching the village darkened. Several regiments of infantry and cavalry, supported by artillery fire and armored cars, piled on

Otrada. Mitrov, seeing me, said: - Comrade commander, order to open fire! - Let

them come closer, be patient! Here the whites approached the distance of a cannon shot. I give a sign,

and immediately our guns began to speak. A fierce artillery battle ensued. An enemy shell exploded about a hundred meters from me. Yekimov was killed before my very eyes. We have lost one of the best red officers. Ekimov commanded the 2nd regiment for a long time (formerly the regiment was called Siberian), took part in fierce battles against

Kolchak and Yudenich. For a second, under enemy fire, people faltered. And then I decided

that I would lead the regiment on the attack myself. - Comrade commander,

where are you, you can't! Steppe Spizharny shouted. Of course, from the point of view of staff workers, I should not have climbed under the bullets. I myself, like Chapaev, taught the commanders where they should be in battle, from where it is better to direct the battle. But is now the time to think about your safety?! The situation in which we found ourselves was desperate - the 4th division had not yet made itself felt. Only the selfless bravery and courage of the cavalry, the composure and

courage of the commanders could save us. I believed in my people. -

Checkers to battle! I commanded. - Follow me, attack, march,

march! Checkers were drawn, spurs were given to the horses, we rushed off the bat to meet the enemy. The frantic firing from

both sides merged into a continuous mighty roar. His ears were muffled, his head was s

there was something to say and listen to. The purpose of the attack, its direction for all obvious and clear.

The regiment is rapidly rushing towards the whites. A mighty "cheers" is heard over the steppe. I have one thought in my head - to hold back the onslaught of the enemy, to prevent him from breaking through to the center of the village, where the field arm is located. I was sure that Voroshilov had already managed to prepare people there and that the enemy would not be able to break us. The fighters of the regiment, which I led on the attack, fought selflessly. We managed to push the whites away from the village. I ordered Stepanov Spizharny to hold the northern part of Otrada at all costs, and I myself rushed to Mitrov's battery, which, under the cover of Goryachev's regiment, fired accurately at the whites. And suddenly I hear: - Comrade

commander, the whites are breaking through to the field guard from the south!

Retreating under our blow on the northern side of the village, the enemy threw up to three regiments in the rear of

Otrada. What to do? I decide to hit them with Yekimov's regiment.

Follow me, eagles! - I command the soldiers loudly. We

rushed to the center of the village. There was already a battle going on at the poleshtarm. Bursting into the square, they saw a Cossack hundred in front of them and crashed into it. The Whites opened fire from light machine guns placed in the yards. The front horses, dumbfounded by the shots at close range, reared up, but under the pressure of those galloping behind, they rushed forward.

Red horsemen rushed like a whirlwind through the streets and alleys of Otrada, crushing the enemy. The White Guards could not stand it and began to retreat. In this battle, Kliment

Efremovich almost died. When enemy horsemen appeared in the rear of the field-army on the south side of Otrada, Voroshilov, at the head of the squadron, rushed to the attack. Several White Guards rushed at Voroshilov. Ahead rushed one with a lance in his hands. Voroshilov fired at him, but missed.

Wrangel hit Voroshilov with a pike. It seemed that death was inevitable. But military happiness this time did not betray Kliment Efremovich. The tip of the lance got stuck in a thick cloak that was on Voroshilov. Several shots rang out. The White Guard fell off his horse dead. The Red Army soldier Shpitalny fired.

In the heavy battle for Otrada, the red cavalry showed miracles of heroism and courage. The commander of the communications squadron, S. M. Zaslavsky, whom I wrote about above, in the most difficult moment attacked the enemy who broke into the village, crashed into the middle of the column and personally hacked to death several White Guards. Pursuing the enemy, S. M. Zaslavsky with the soldiers freed the captured trumpeters, dressing station, kitchen of the Special Cavalry Brigade and captured three enemy machine guns ... At the cost of the heroic efforts of many fighters and commanders, at the cost of many lives, we managed to hold back the onslaught of the White Guard troops near Otrada. There are many such episodes in Budyonny's memoirs. Although their drama and pathos were added to a large extent by skilled lithic workers, there is no doubt that the battles in Northern Tavria were fierce and Semyon Mikhailovich showed remarkable courage in them. The position of the Reds was complicated by the fact that their opponents made extensive use of armored cars, tanks and airplanes that flew over the cavalry and bombarded them. The First Cavalry had neither armored cars nor aviation - before the offensive they were transferred to the disposal of other units. On November 2, Budyonny addressed Frunze with the following note: "The First Cavalry is fulfilling your directive in the difficult conditions of the absence of armored cars and aviation in the army. Despite all efforts, requests, the equipment has not been delivered so far, and the fight takes place in unequal battles. Now the enemy has a huge number of armored cars and airplanes. Topographical conditions and weather are favorable for the use of auto parts. The continuous cruising of enemy armored cars deprives the cavalry division of the opportunity to fully carry out combat missions; bombing from airplanes flying in groups over horse masses is not paralyzed by anything on our part. During the entire operation, not a single airplane of ours appeared above our location. All this allowed the Whites to break through the battle formations of the First Cavalry and leave in an organized manner for the Crimea on November 3. Budyonny's memoirs say: "The last enemy units left Northern

The bridge was on fire. The forward squadrons of the 6th Cavalry Division managed to break through the fire across the bridge to the opposite bank of the Sivash, but, having met especially stubborn resistance from the Wrangel troops there, they were forced to retreat ... The main backbone of the Wrangel units - the officers were our mortal enemies and fought with great stubbornness and bitterness ... Pursuing the retreating, the 6th Cavalry Division was the first to enter the Chongar Peninsula. Here, concrete trenches were prepared by the enemy, covered with a wire fence. If at least one rifle division had arrived here and occupied these trenches, it would have blocked the way for the Wrangelites to the Crimea. But our infantry did not keep up with the enemy leaving on wagons. I had no contact with the 30th division. And the enemy units with armored cars and heavy artillery, which were walking in a continuous stream, pushed us back, occupied the trenches and fortified in them ... " later the films of Sergei Eisenstein. He recalled: "I continued to shoot until the moment when the white cavalry came close to the mill where I was. The Red Cavalry went on the counterattack. With great difficulty, with a movie camera, I managed to get down, where they picked me up on a cart ... "Now let's see how the same battles in Northern Tavia were seen from the side of the whites. P. N. Wrangel wrote in hot pursuit in an article published in the Yuzhnye Vesti newspaper at the end of 1920: "The strategic plan of the Bolsheviks, thanks to our well-established agents, was known to us in advance ... forces, namely the 6th and 1st cavalry army of Budenny ... break into the rear of the Russian army, capture the isthmus and cut it off from the Crimea. The Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Army in the same article outlined his own countermeasures as follows: "On the night of October 17-18 (October 30-31), screened from the north by the Don cavalry corps, which successfully repelled the attacks of the enemy's 2nd Cavalry Army, our strike group unexpectedly approached To

settled for the night in the Salkovo area red .... At dawn on October 18 (October 31), our group unexpectedly attacked the Reds, pinning them to the Sivash. In his memoirs, Wrangel described the final battle in Northern Tavria in much more detail: "According to the directive of the Red Command, on October 13, the enemy crossed over in the Nikopol region with units of the II Cavalry Army, with infantry divisions temporarily assigned to it. In the future, Mironov's II Cavalry Army was tasked with swiftly striking south in the direction of the Salkovo station. The IV Army from the Orekhov-Aleksandrovsk region moved with the whole mass of infantry in the direction of Vasilievka-Timashevka to strike at the main forces of the Russian army from the northeast. The XIII Army, which occupied the Berdyansk-Pologi line, was tasked with capturing Melitopol. The main blow was to be delivered from the Kakhov bridgehead by units of the 1st Cavalry and VI Soviet Armies, and while the 6th Army was to advance south in the general direction of Perekop, the 1st Cavalry was to hit our main forces in the Serogoz region, trying to break through to Salkov and Genichesk. Having completed the concentration, on October 15 the enemy launched a decisive offensive along the entire front. By the time I arrived in Dzhankoy, the units of General Kutepov and General Abramov had been fighting for the third day. The frost was getting stronger, for decades the Crimea had not seen such cold weather at this time of the year. The number of frostbitten people was constantly growing. People wrapped themselves in the first rags that came across, some stuffed straw under their shirts ... Despite all the valor of the troops, the Kornilov division was pushed back from N. Rogachek, the enemy was firmly entrenched on the left bank of the river and began to spread to the south. On October 15, units of the 2nd Corps were pushed back by the enemy advancing from the Kakhov bridgehead.

From here, the main blow of the Reds should have been expected. I handed over to General Abramov the 1st and 2nd Don Cossack divisions that were in my reserve, ordering them to strike at the rear of the Red Cavalry Army operating from N. Rogachek, trying to cut it off from the crossings. At the same time, I ordered Gener

division, with all the forces of the shock group concentrated in the Serogoz area, fall on the Kakhov group of the Reds. On October 16, frost reached 14 degrees in the morning. A thick fog descended. There was nothing to be seen for a few steps. By evening, a report was received from the 2nd corps that parts of the latter, pressed by the enemy, continue to retreat to Perekop. Large masses of Red cavalry, flowing around the right flank of the 2nd Corps, quickly advanced eastward, the Red I Cavalry Army with its entire mass moved to the rear of our armies, trying to cut them off from the Crimea. Meanwhile, General Kutepov hesitated. During the whole day of the 16th he continued to remain in the Serogoz region. On the radio, I gave him an order to hastily move towards Salkov, trying to press the enemy that had broken through to Sivash. However, it was clear that the enemy would have time to approach the isthmus before the units of General Kutepov arrived there. The enemy moved freely and could be expected in the Salkov area by the evening of the 17th. The fortified position that covered the exits from the Crimea was occupied only by weak guard teams. The red units from the raid could easily capture the Salkovsky defile, interrupting any connection between the Crimea and the army. It was necessary to hastily occupy the defile with troops. On the night of the 16th to the 17th, I sent an order to General Abramov to send the 7th Infantry Division concentrated in Melitopol to Salkov under the cover of armored trains. During the night, the echelons with troops moved along the railroad. However, due to the clogged path, movement was extremely slow. Frost reached 20 degrees. Station pumps, unadapted to such cold weather, froze. Echelons with troops got stuck on the way. The terrible hours have come. I didn't have troops at hand, - access to the Crimea was open for the enemy. During the whole day of the 17th, everything that could be collected from those capable of bearing weapons was sent to Salkov: the cadet school from Simferopol, the artillery school, my convoy; from Feodosia, the Kuban units of General Fostikov, who did not have time to complete the formation, were demanded. At dusk, the advanced units of the red cavalry approached Salkov.

the dismounted red cavalry tried to advance, but was repulsed by rifle fire and artillery. In the middle of the night, we managed to contact General Kutepov by radio. He occupied the area with Agaiman and on the morning of the 18th he planned to move to Otrada - Rozhdestvenskoye. I ordered him to speed up the movement as much as possible, to get in touch with the units of the II Army retreating by rail and, having united the command, strike at the enemy from the north, pressing him to the Sivash. In the morning of the 18th unit of General Abramov began to approach the Rykove station. The 3rd Don division of the valiant General Guselytsikov started a battle with the enemy in the Novo-Alekseevka area. By noon, units of General Kutepov were approaching Rozhdestvensky and Otrada, having in the right, western, column the Kuban Cossack, 2nd cavalry divisions and the Terek-Astrakhan brigade, in the left, eastern, the 1st cavalry and Drozdov divisions, in the rear guard - Kornilov division. The enemy, apparently ill-informed about the situation, continued to remain with the whole mass of his cavalry in the Novo Alekseevka - Salkovo - Genichesk area. The position of the cavalry of "comrade" Budyonny, pressed from the northeast and from the north by our units to the swampy, saline, still poorly frozen Sivash, could turn out to be infinitely difficult. Parts of the foot 3rd Don Division of General Guselytsikov, together with the approaching 7th Infantry Division, supported by armored trains, decisively attacked the enemy, apparently not expecting a blow from this side. Budyonny's cavalry was taken by surprise; shelves stood unsaddled in the yards. The red cavalry rushed about in disorder. Hastily assembled squadrons jumped out in all directions, breaking through between our infantry. One enemy battery in full harness and most of his convoys fell into the hands of General Guselytsikov. The exit to the Crimea was open for the army. If General Kutepov had acted more decisively, the color of the red cavalry, the cavalry of "comrade" Budyonny, would have suffered the fate of Zhloba's cavalry. Unfortunately, the offensive impulse of the troops was already largely lost



the troops fought sluggishly. The leaders themselves did not show the necessary confidence. The main mass of the red cavalry managed to slip almost unhindered in front of the cavalry front of General Kutepov to

the east. By nightfall, units of General Kutepov concentrated in the Otrada-Rozhdestvenskoye area, where they held out, repelling the attacks of the Reds during October 19th. Parts of General Abramov slowly retreated, waging heavy fighting, to Genichesk and Salkov. On October 20, General Abramov began to get involved in the defile. Parts of General Kutepov began to come up behind the units of General Abramov, pursued on the heels of the Red cavalry, by this time the II Cavalry Red Army had concentrated in Petrovsky, the Latvian, 9th, 30th and 52nd Rifle Divisions were being pulled up there. To the east, along the line of the railway, the 5th and 9th cavalry divisions and parts of the "father" Makhno advanced. To the west, units of the 1st Red Cavalry Army operated. By the evening of October 20, the Drozdov division took the Salkovsky position. The rest of the generals Kutepov and Abramov (1st and 2nd Don divisions, 1st and 2nd cavalry divisions, the Kuban Cossack division, the Terek-Astrakhan brigade and the Kornilov division) passed to the Chongar Peninsula. The Markov division with units of the 7th

Infantry Division and the 3rd Don Division marched on Genichesk. On the night of October 21, the Reds attacked the Salkov position, broke through the front of the Drozdov division and broke into the Chongar Peninsula on its shoulders, but were repulsed by a

counterattack and the situation was restored. Parts of the 2nd Corps took up the Perekop position. The decisive battle in Northern Tavia is over. The enemy took possession of the entire territory captured from him during the summer. He got a lot of military booty: 5 armored trains, 18 guns, about 100 wagons with shells, 10 million rounds of ammunition, 25 locomotives, trains with food and commissary property, and about two million poods of bread in Melitopol and Genichesk. Our units suffered severe losses in killed, wounded and frostbite. A significant number were left behind by prisoners and stragglers.

Red Army soldiers put into service at different times. There were isolated cases of mass surrenders. So one of the battalions of the Drozdov division surrendered entirely. However, the army remained intact and our units, in turn, captured 15 guns, about 2,000 prisoners, a lot of weapons and machine guns.

Despite heavy losses, Wrangel had something to be proud of. In the conditions of a fourfold numerical superiority of the enemy, he did the almost impossible: he did not allow the Second Cavalry Army to connect with the First Cavalry, threw English armored cars and tanks against the Cavalrymen, cavalry formations and infantry gathered into a fist and - broke into the Crimea. In his

justification, Budyonny wrote in his memoirs: "When the White troops began to retreat, the outcome of the battle, its success, to a large extent became directly dependent on the actions of the 2nd Cavalry Army. On October 29, she was tasked with breaking through to Serogozy at all costs, together with the 6th and 1st Cavalry armies, to surround the enemy's most powerful strike force here ... and destroy ... But, unfortunately, the enemy managed to tie down the actions of the 2nd Cavalry armies ... In the morning and all day she fought scattered battles with individual enemy units ...

The commander of the 2nd Cavalry decided that the main forces of Wrangel were advancing on him, and gave the command to change the direction of his main forces from south to southeast. This was a deviation from the task set by the front command ... There was still time to correct the mistake ... But time was lost and the main forces of the strike group of General Kutepov attacked the First Cavalry.

However, a member of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Southern Front, S. I. Gusev, in a speech delivered on November 18, 1920, said something completely different: "Wrangel managed to break into the Crimea thanks to our poverty in military supplies, in technology. We didn't have armored cars, we didn't have tanks ... The enemy had dozens of armored cars, 60 trucks on which he installed machine guns, and thanks to this he managed to break through the ring surrounding him ... The second cavalry army showed such strength in battle that Wrangel was misled and mistook it for the army of Budyonny ... On October 30, Wrangel gave the order to defe

managed. Recalling the battles in Northern Tavria, Marshal Budyonny shows dissatisfaction with the actions of the command of the 2nd Cavalry Army, as well as the 4th and 13th armies, which, in his opinion, "acted insufficiently actively." In short, he is dissatisfied with the actions of everyone except ...

Commander Budyonny. Humanity understands, but does the party really teach like that?" Later, when all the documents of both sides about the battles in Northern Tavria became known, Soviet historians came to the conclusion that the blame for the fact that Wrangel was missed in the Crimea still lies for the most part on the command of the Second Cavalry and Field Soviet Armies. N. E. Kakurin in the "Strategic Outline of the Civil War" wrote: "The 1st cavalry army moved forward rapidly, but at the same time divided its forces into two equal groups (two divisions each) with a

gap of 40 km between them ... However, the 2nd cavalry the army did not show due swiftness during these two days and did not advance with the main mass of its forces further than the area with. Belozerk, grappling with two enemy cavalry regiments, which were very active. The offensive of the IV and XIII armies began to develop successfully, but they also moved slowly forward. The deep breakthrough of Budyonny's cavalry came as a complete surprise to the enemy, but the delay of the II Cavalry Army and the delay of the VI Army at Perekop gave him the opportunity to understand the situation and outline a withdrawal plan, especially since on October 30, the I Cavalry Army, in turn, planned only a general regrouping of their divisions with a front to the north, and all of them were assigned only defensive tasks. Having contacted his troops, Wrangel, whose headquarters was in Dzhankoy, ordered the Don corps to hastily break through to the Chongar Isthmus, hiding behind only barriers from the side of the XII Army; Kutepov's corps from the Serogoz region was supposed to do the same. On October 30 and 31, in a series of stubborn battles, these corps fought their way through the isolated divisions of the 1st Cavalry Army and during November 1 and 2, hiding behind the stubborn

The above circumstances made it possible for the main forces of Wrangel to withdraw at the cost of heavy losses in the Crimea; at the same time, he lost about 100 guns and 7 armored trains, a huge amount of ammunition and over 20 thousand prisoners alone, which amounted to 60% of the personnel of his armies. Here Kakurin criticizes the command of the First Cavalry only because it divided its divisions into two groups. However, in itself, such a decision can hardly be considered erroneous. First, it was difficult to control four divisions at once. Secondly, the concentration of all divisions of the Cavalry in one direction left other ways of retreat of the

Wrangel troops to the Crimea open. Frunze warned the commander of the Second Cavalry Mironov: "I draw your attention to the lack of due energy and determination in the actions of your cavalry. Instead of, according to my order, pulling into the general shock mass, swiftly rush to the area of Serogoza, Kalashinskaya, its main mass spent the whole day on October 30 passively in the area of Bolshaya Belozerk, repulsing the attack of two enemy cavalry regiments, which clearly had the goal of covering the withdrawal main forces.

The same inexcusable inaction did not provide timely assistance to the units of the 1st Cavalry, who were forced to endure a battle in the Agaiman region, which

did not give decisive results, with the main mass of the enemy's cavalry. It is possible that Mironov deliberately took

care of the fighters of his small army, so that later, after the end of the Civil War, he would have enough strength to present some political demands to the authorities on behalf of the Cossacks and the peasantry. In any case, at the top, it seems that is exactly what they decided. And Mironov, after the completion of the operation against Wrangel, as we remember, was transferred to the honorary post of cavalry inspector, which was significant in appearance, but did not provide for direct command of the troops. Soon Mironov, who had not yet had time to take up a new position, was quietly arrested, and then just as quietly

Ironically, Budyonny himself was an inspector of the Red Army cavalry in 1924-1937. But when he was appointed to this post, the main thing was not the desire to remove him from the direct command of the troops (although this motive was also present), but the need to provide Semyon Mikhailovich with a post in which he could not particularly harm the development of the armed forces. The cavalry inspection was engaged in the development of charters and the determination of the needs of the red cavalry in supply and horse composition. Here Budyonny's love for horses was absolutely out of place, as was his knowledge of horse breeding. The combat training of the cavalry was also his forte, he did this back in the tsarist army - however, then only on the scale of a platoon. As for the strategy and tactics of the combat use of cavalry, the former commander of the First Cavalry did not bother with this. These questions were the prerogative of the Headquarters of the Red Army, and later the General Staff. In peacetime, Budyonny's charisma was not in demand, but for the purposes of propaganda, the outwardly solid position of cavalry inspector was quite suitable. Mironov, on the other hand, was not at all suitable for a propaganda figure, and he would hardly have stayed in this bureaucratic position for a long time. They were not going to keep him on it, but they used it as a bait to lure the commander out of the location of the Second Cavalry. And the behavior of Filipp Kuzmich during the last battles against Wrangel, perhaps for the people in the Kremlin, was one of the impetuses for making a decision to eliminate him. The Budennovites did not have time to blow up the bridge across the Genichsky Strait, along which part of Wrangel's army went to the Crimea. This was the only thing for which Frunze criticized Budyonny during the operation in Northern Tavia. But there was no great fault of Semyon Mikhailovich in this case either. The inaction of the Second Cavalry and other armies forced the cavalymen to fight alone with the best Wrangel units, and the error with the bridge could stem from general fatigue, as well as from the fact that Budyonny hoped to hold this bridge in order to invade the Crimea according to the

On November 7, 1920, without any operational pause to prevent the enemy from coming to his senses, the troops of the Southern Front stormed Perekop. The first cavalry was introduced into the gap only on November 13 and moved on a forced march to Simferopol and Sevastopol following the 6th and Second cavalry armies. This delay is explained by the fact that Budyonny's army was too battered during the fighting in Northern Tavia, as it took the main blow of the Wrangel troops, and it was not advisable to use cavalry to break through the fortifications. On November 14, Budyonny and Voroshilov with the vanguard of the Cavalry entered Simferopol, and the next day they entered Sevastopol, abandoned the day before by Wrangel. On November 16, Budyonny reported to the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic: "Wrangel was liquidated exactly in twenty days, as promised, on the anniversary of the 1st Cavalry. Congratulations on the final victory over Comrade Wrangel. Lenin, the All-Russian Central Executive Committee and the Central Committee of the RCP

(b). And on November 16, 1920, the commanders of the First and Second Cavalry Armies gave a joint telegram to Moscow: "On November 12, the Second Cavalry occupied Dzhankoy, Kurman-Kemelchi with battle, finally forcing the enemy to clear the Crimea in a stampede.

The 4th Army, having taken Dzhankoy from the Second Cavalry Army, headed towards Feodosia. The second Horse at 18 o'clock on November 13 entered Simferopol without a fight, cleared by the enemy at 13 o'clock. the 13th of November.

By the evening of November 14, the First Cavalry Army concentrated in the Simferopol region.

The 6th Army (51st Division) at 3 pm on November 15 entered Sevastopol, cleared the day before by the enemy, and at the same time occupied Yalta ... The Crimea was cleared of the enemy. The telegram was signed by Voroshilov and Budyonny, a member of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Second Cavalry N.P. Gorbunov, and the

head of the 51st Division V.K. Blucher. For the victory over Wrangel, the Revolutionary Military Council of the Southern Front awarded Budyonny with a silver saber, which previously belonged to the Emir of Bukhara. And in January 1921, the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of the RSFSR

weapons, gilded Mauser, decorated with the Order of the Red Banner of Battle - for the skillful leadership of the First Cavalry Army. Frunze later assessed

the role of the Budyonny Cavalry in the Civil War as follows: "Its weapons played a decisive role in many of the most important campaigns during the Civil War. Denikin, White Poles, Wrangel, Makhno - these names alone are enough to judge the role of the First Cavalry in the history of our revolutionary wars ... There are no other units in our army that would reflect the whole character in themselves and their actions with such completeness, such brightness and depth civil war, the character of the entire Red Army as a whole. By the way, there is a legend that during the battles for the Crimea, when Budyonny checked the captured cartridges - whether they were smokeless or not, he brought a cigarette to them. The gunpowder flared up and scorched one mustache, which turned gray. Since then, Semyon Mikhailovich tinted it. Budyonny wanted to completely shave off his mustache, but Frunze did not give it: "This, Semyon, is not your mustache, but a folk one ..." Whether it's a legend or not, it fully corresponds to Budyonny's role in the Soviet mythology of the Civil War. What is a cavalry hero without a mustache? Perhaps, for the Soviet government, Budyonny's mustache was sometimes

more important than his head.

With the liquidation of the Wrangel Front, the Civil War did not end for the First Cavalry. From the end of 1920, the Budennovites fought the Makhnovists, with whom they had just fought side by side against Wrangel. In these battles, the commander of the 14th division, A. Ya. Parkhomenko, and the commander of all anti-Makhnovist units, A. A. Bogengard, died. On January 3, 1921, the Makhnovists hacked them to death near the village of Buzovka in the Kherson region, suddenly attacking the Red commanders riding in carts. But the forces were too unequal. By mid-spring, the main detachments of the Makhnovists, whose social base had significantly narrowed after the introduction of the NEP, were finished. Many rebels died in battle or were captured, many took advantage of the declared amnesty. On August 26, 1921, N.I. Makhno himself crossed the Dniester with a small detachment and surrendered to the Romanian troops.

Four months before that, on April 28, 1921, the headquarters and the Revolutionary Military Council of the Cavalry were transformed into the headquarters and Revolutionary Military Council of the North Caucasian Military District. In fact, this meant that regular troops were no longer required to fight the Makhnovist movement. Voroshilov became the commander of the district, Budyonny - his deputy and a member of the Revolutionary Military Council of the North Caucasus Military District. At the same time, he retained the post of commander of the Cavalry, which was reduced to two divisions. M. K. Lewandovsky became the deputy commander of the North Caucasian Military District for combat, O. U. Sakov became the deputy for political affairs, and A. M. Peremytov became the chief of staff of the district. A.S. Bubnov was appointed the second member of the Revolutionary Military Council of the district and a member of the Revolutionary

Military Council of the First Cavalry. In addition, Voroshilov forever remained the honorary first member of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Cavalry. The condition of the Cavalry after the fight against Wrangel and the Makhnovists was only slightly better than that in which it returned from the Polish front. The head of the Special Department of the First Cavalry Latvian Zvederis reported to the Presidium of the Cheka: "In the Army, banditry will not get rid of as long as such a person as VOROSHILOV exists, because a person with such tendencies, clearly, is a person in whom all these half-partisans, half-bandits found support. VOROSHILOV, a petty tyrant by nature, decided that the further strengthening of the Special Department could have bad consequences personally for many high-ranking "junkers" ... Demobilization began. A special triumphant, demobilization-festive mood was created, which resulted in wholesale drunkenness and the complete collapse of the work of the Headquarters and institutions, which reached the point that when MAKHNO was 20 miles from Yekaterinoslav, and only by chance did not turn to rob, in the city there was not only no actual forces, but positively no precautionary measures were taken ... At the same time, in the Revolutionary Military Council and members (MININ was more careful and was not noticed), and secretaries drank wine brought from the Crimea and the Cauca



various charitable evenings, pumping hundreds of thousands there, and required the obligatory presence of a young communist to serve on the table ... a communist who went over from the Red Army to Denikin, who was there in a command position ... In the Red Army he became Voroshilov's favorite favorite. Some of the drivers of VOROSHILOV and BUDENNY, brought from the Crimea, with officer faces turned out to be quite suspicious ... "However, in connection with the reorganization of the Cavalry, Voroshilov and Budyonny managed to safely fuse Zvederis to Moscow. His report had no effect on them. And Rafail Petrovich Khmel'nitsky, despite his politically dubious reputation, remained Voroshilov's guarantor until the Great Patriotic War, became a general, successfully survived all the purges and peacefully died in 1964 at the age of 66. The headquarters of the North Caucasian Military District and the Cavalry was located in Rostov in the former Palace Hotel. The families of Budyonny and Voroshilov lived in one luxurious mansion, left by the fugitive "former" of the new government. With all the difficulties in supplying the army, with all the droughts and crop failures, wine and fruits were always served for dinner, the table was decorated with fresh flowers.

But a peaceful life for Budyonny and Budyonny has not yet come. In the North Caucasus, the Cavalry had to fight with the White Partisan detachments of Generals Przhevalsky and Ukhtomsky, Colonels Nazarov and Trubachev, Lieutenant Colonels Krivonosov, Yudin and many others, totaling up to seven thousand people. Donchek and the Special Department of the Cavalry managed in June 1921 to arrest the leadership of the white underground in Rostov. Its leaders, Lieutenant General Ukhtomsky and Colonel Nazarov, were forced to sign an appeal calling for an end to the struggle. As a result, several thousand

surrendered, taking advantage of the amnesty, which was valid until September 1, 1921.

On September 20, Budyonny was appointed commander of all troops in the Kuban and the Black Sea. His task was to destroy the Kuban rebel army of General Przhevalsky. The rebels were pressed against the Kuban River. During the crossing, a significant part of them was destroyed, the survivors went to the mountains. The organized rebel movement in the North Caucasus was over by the end of the year. In addition to the punitive operations of the Cavalry, as already mentioned, its role was played by the fact that after the abolition of the surplus appraisal and the introduction of a new economic policy (NEP), the Cossacks lost their incentive to armed struggle against the Soviets. The civil war for Budyonny is over.

## **Chapter Seven**

### **Cavalier Number One**

At the IX All-Russian Congress of Soviets in December 1921, Budyonny proposed to remove the unbearable tax in kind on meat from those farms where there were no more than one pair of oxen. This proposal was accepted. Semyon Mikhailovich developed a reputation as a people's intercessor, which worried his friend Voroshilov. The friendship of Budyonny and Voroshilov, about which so much has been said and written, in fact was on the part of Kliment Efremovich - at least in the early years - something like espionage. In a confidential letter to Stalin on February 1, 1923, Voroshilov, without a shadow of embarrassment, stated:

"Budyonny ... too a peasant, too popular and very cunning ... In the presentation of our enemies, Budyonny should play the role of some kind of savior (peasant leader), heading the "people's" movement ... If there really would ever be a serious clash ... of interests between the proletariat and the peasantry, Budyonny would find himself with the latter ... I know Budyonny better than anyone else in the party, and I think with you that it must be used for the revolution entirely and completely. To the best of my

I did everything in my power in this respect, and as if the results were positive. The future people's commissar of defense was especially worried about the incredible popularity of Budyonny among the cavalry: "Our dear comrades (in the center), without realizing it, shout too much about Budyonny, the "Budyonnovsky" army, "Budyonnovtsy" and other things, which in no way answers neither party nor general revolutionary tasks. Today the commissar of the headquarters of the 1st Cavalry Comrade Ter told me an incident from the life of a squadron during the army of the 1st Cavalry. When asked by a young Red Army soldier what he would fight for, the latter replied: "For Budyonny." Voroshilov also feared the appointment of Budyonny as People's Commissar of Agriculture, since "to throw Budyonny into the abyss of peasant land would be crazy." It turns out that "friend Klim" considered "friend Semyon" solely in the interests of the party and the proletarian revolution, and in which case he could slap, like the former commander of the Cavalry Corps Boris Mokeevich Dumenko, which he proudly recalled in the same letter: "If I didn't remove Dumenko in time, he would have caused us big troubles." Then, in 1923, Voroshilov seriously feared that in the event of a conflict between the party and the peasantry, the people would shake the old days, remember Razin and Pugachev, and elect Budyonny as their leader. He, like Tukhachevsky, was suspected of Bonapartism. It was impossible to allow the Red Army soldiers to go into battle and die "for Budyonny." It was supposed to die "for the party", "for the world revolution" and personally for the leaders: first "for Lenin", then "for Stalin". Budyonny was a real commander of the Civil War, and there the outcome of the battle often depended on the ability to convince his subordinates that they were going into battle for a just cause. In the eyes of the Bolsheviks, Budyonny was a peasant leader who, one way or another, knew how to keep the elements of the masses in check, to direct them to the service of the revolution. Voroshilov, it seems, seriously feared that the elements would get out of control and elevate Budyonny to power. In fact, Budyonny had no Bonapartist inten

had a too narrow political and cultural outlook. And, frankly, he only had enough business qualities to manage a small stud farm. Stalin very soon became convinced of this and did not share Voroshilov's fears about Budyonny. When, after the Great

Patriotic War, Kliment Efremovich experienced Stalin's disgrace, was accused of being a seasoned British spy, and had every chance to go after Tukhachevsky, if Stalin lived a little longer, Semyon Mikhailovich did not experience any unpleasant consequences of this and was suspected of nothing was not. The solution was simple. Then, after the war, Joseph Vissarionovich cleared the political Olympus from the old guard, so that his successor could more easily consolidate his grip on power. Budyonny had no political significance, so there was no need to remove it. And in the early 1920s, Stalin

decided that Semyon Mikhailovich could be used to fight against his main opponent, Trotsky. In March 1922, Budyonny visited Moscow for the XI Party Congress. After the end of the congress, Stalin, who had just been elected general secretary, received Budyonny. It happened on April 4th. Semyon Mikhailovich said in a conversation with the Secretary General that the cavalry was in distress. And the point is not at all in its planned reduction. The cavalry units have very little artillery. So, the regiment of a separate cavalry division has only two guns, and the regiment of a separate cavalry brigade has one in general. Meanwhile, in 1920, the Poles had five artillery pieces per cavalry regiment. Budyonny also noted that with modern means of observation, especially from the air, and in conditions of saturation of the infantry with firepower, the cavalry is becoming more and more vulnerable, including from air strikes, which will certainly develop at an accelerated pace. Semyon Mikhailovich remembered the defeat of the Zhloba corps in Northern Tavria, in which the Wrangel airplanes played a significant role, quickly detecting the red cavalry and bombing it. Therefore, all hope is

the surprise of cavalry attacks, as well as to reinforce the cavalry with firepower, aircraft and armored parts.

Budyonny also considered it necessary to unify the staff of the cavalry divisions, increase the horse stock and equip the cavalry units with additional means of communication so that operational control was possible. After carefully listening to all these considerations, Stalin frightened Budyonny with Trotsky's plans to completely eliminate the cavalry, which enlisted his unconditional support in the upcoming struggle to remove Lev Davydovich from the post of chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council of the republic. After this conversation, Budyonny was offered the high post of assistant commander-in-chief for cavalry, but Semyon Mikhailovich asked for

another year to complete his affairs in the North Caucasus Military District. On December 31, 1922, the "All-Union Headman" M.I. Kalinin presented Budyonny with the second Order of the Red Banner - for success on the Polish front. And on September 5, 1923,

Budyonny received an order to leave for Moscow for the post of assistant commander in chief for cavalry. Stalin retained a marked attention to Budyonny in subsequent years. So, in 1933, he gave him his photograph with a warm caption: "To the creator of the Red Cavalry, friend and comrade Semyon Mikhailovich from I. Stalin. 11.5.33. True, at that time, propaganda put Voroshilov in the first place as the creator of the red

cavalry, and in the late 30s Stalin himself took this place. In January 1924, Budyonny was a member of the commission for checking the Moscow Military District. According to the results of the audit, in connection with the identified shortcomings, Trotsky's supporter N. I. Muralov was moved to the post of commander of the North Caucasian Military District in May 1924, and

Voroshilov took his place in the Moscow Military District, in turn, leaving the post of commander of the North Caucasus Military District. This reshuffle was a great victory for Stalin in his fight against Trotsky, since the Moscow District was of particular importance in the unfolding str

Commander-in-Chief for Cavalry, and with the abolition of the post of Commander-in-Chief, he headed the Red Army Cavalry Inspectorate in 1924. At the II All-Union Congress of Soviets, held in Moscow from January 26 to February 2, 1924, Budyonny was elected to the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee of the USSR. And on March 25 of the same year, E. M. Sklyansky, Trotsky's closest ally, was removed from the Revolutionary Military Council and replaced by Frunze. The new composition of the RVS included Trotsky (chairman), Frunze (deputy), Bubnov (head of the PUR), Unshlikht (supply chief), Voroshilov, Lashevich, Budyonny, Kamenev, Rozengolts, Ordzhonikidze, Eliava, Myasnikov, Khidyr Aliev and Karaev. On January 26, 1925, the logical result of the struggle for power in the Red Army came - Frunze replaced Trotsky as chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council of the USSR and People's Commissar for Military and Naval Affairs. K. E. Voroshilov became his deputy in both posts, while continuing to command the key Moscow military district. After the mysterious death of Frunze on the operating table in October of the same year, Voroshilov took his place.

During the investigation, Budyonny's second wife O. S. Mikhailova claimed that Budyonny was offended by the appointment of Voroshilov to the post of People's Commissar for Military and Naval Affairs. On this occasion, Semyon Mikhailovich allegedly declared that "he intends to stand up for himself and is going to go to the Don to collect participants in the civil war with whom he fought in the first years of the revolution, and either come out victorious, forcing the leaders of the party and the country to reckon with him by armed force, or loses his head." And at the news of the appointment of Tukhachevsky as deputy people's commissar, Budyonny allegedly told his wife: "As soon as I go through the forests, I'll show them to hell with the Jewish Kremlin." It is also characteristic that on the eve of Tukhachevsky's arrest, according to his wife and her niece, Semyon Mikhailovich "made an attack against Iosif Vissarionovich. In such a harsh form, I heard his statements for the first time ... Previously, he only told gossip. Almost certainly all these statements were fiction, written under the dictation of the investigator. Semyon Mikhailovich was not such a naive person, in the presence of his wife, and even more so her niece, to speak negatively about

Stalin. Moreover, relations with Olga Stefanovna, who openly cheated on him with the singer Alekseev, were then by no means the warmest. And it is unbelievable to imagine that Budyonny aimed for such a purely political post as People's Commissar of Defense, expected to bypass Voroshilov here and even threatened to go to the Don to raise the Cossacks. Obviously, just in case, the NKVD was collecting material in order to fasten Budyonny to another military conspiracy. But Stalin was not going to set in motion the Budyonnovsky case, since from the very beginning of the purge he was going to save the cavalry grouping. He had to rely on someone among the military! Here is a colorful portrait of Budyonny in the first half of the 20s in the memoirs of former Politburo Secretary Boris Bazhanov, one of the first Soviet defectors: "The entire Stalinist military group during the civil war went up. It is difficult to find any capable military man in it. But the already skillfully orchestrated propaganda of some of them made celebrities, for example, Budyonny. It was a very picturesque character. A typical sergeant-major of the tsarist army, a good cavalryman and a grunt, he found himself at the beginning of the civil war at the head of a cavalry gang that fought against the whites. At the head - formally - several communists manipulated the gang. The gang grew, gained success - the cavalry were the tanks of these years. At some point, Moscow, which relied on cavalry, came to grips with Budyonny. Trotsky at this time threw the slogan "Proletarian, on the horse!", which sounded rather comical in its pomposity and unreality. The fact is that people of the steppes made good cavalry - born cavalrymen, such as the Cossacks. It was still possible to put a peasant on a horse, who, not being a cavalryman, nevertheless knew the horse, got used to it and knew how to handle it. But the urban worker ("proletariat") on horseback was nowhere.

Trotsky's slogan sounded ridiculous. At some point, Budyonny received gifts from Moscow as a sign of attention: a car and a party card. A somewhat alarmed Budyonny called the leaders of his g

lads," he reported, "they sent me a car from Moscow and this." Here, carefully, like a fragile Chinese vase, he waited on the table for a party ticket. The lads became thoughtful, but on mature reflection decided: "Take the car, Semyon; car is good. And "this" (membership card), you know, let it lie: he does not ask for bread. So Budyonny became a communist.

The Budyonny gang soon grew into a brigade, then into a cavalry corps. Moscow gave him commissars and a good chief of staff. Rising in rank and being a commander, Budyonny did not interfere in operational affairs and command. When the headquarters asked his opinion about the planned operation, he invariably answered: "And you know that as you know. My job is to cut." During the civil war, he "hacked" and unquestioningly obeyed Stalin and Voroshilov, who were assigned to him and commanded him. After the war, he was made something of a cavalry inspector. In the end, somehow they decided to let him attend a meeting of the famous Politburo. My memory accurately retained this amusing event. At

the meeting of the Politburo, the turn comes to questions of the military department. I give orders to let the summoned military into the hall, including Budyonny. Budyonny enters on tiptoe, but heavily rattling his heavy boots. Between the table and the wall, the passage is wide, but the whole figure of Budyonny expresses fear - as if something were not to fall down and break. They show him a chair next to Rykov. Budyonny sits down. His mustache sticks out like a cockroach. He looks straight ahead and clearly does not understand what is being said. He seems to be thinking: "Here you go, this is the famous Politburo, which, they say, can do anything, even

turn a man into a woman." Meanwhile, the affairs of the Revolutionary Military Council are over. Kamenev says: "We have finished with the strategy. Military people are free." Sitting Budyonny, does not understand such subtleties. And Kamenev is also an eccentric: "Military people are free." If only it were like this: "Comrade Budyonny! Attention! Right shoulder forward, step march! Well, then everything would be clear. Here Stalin with a broad gesture of a hospitable host: "Sit, Semyon, sit." So



Budyonny two or three more questions. In the end, I explained to him that it was time to

leave. Then Budyonny became a marshal, and in 1943 he even joined the Central Committee of the party. True, this was the Central Committee of the Stalinist draft, and if Stalin had a sense of humor, he would at the same time, following the example of Caligula, could introduce the Budennyovskiy horse into the Central

Committee. But Stalin did not have a sense of humor. It must be added that during the Soviet-German war, the insignificance of both Voroshilov and Budyonny became so obvious after the very first operations that Stalin had to send them to the Urals to prepare reserves. Undoubtedly, everything that refers to the period of the Civil War in Bazhanov's memoirs does not reflect his personal experience with Budyonny, but the rumors that circulated among the top of Soviet society about the commander of the First Cavalry. So, of course, it is impossible to vouch for the literal transmission of Budyonny's words. Something here comes from the anecdotes of the "Budennyov cycle" that were already being born then. But here's a sketch of "Budyonny at the Politburo" made clearly from life. In general, Bazhanov's testimony perfectly conveys the perception of the figure of the "first checker of the republic" by the Soviet political elite. In these biased memoirs, Semyon Mikhailovich looks like some kind of operetta character, sort of dressed up in the circle of leaders, a dashing grunt, who knows nothing about either strategy or tactics. Well, as for tactics, we have already seen through the example of a number of battles of the Civil War that this is not so. Budyonny showed himself to be a cunning and quite skilled cavalry tactician. But he certainly was neither a strategist nor a politician. And, of course, Budyonny did not influence personnel and organizational decisions in the Red Army - it was a decoration

designed to demonstrate to the people the national character of their beloved army. Frunze instructed Budyonny to prepare a combat charter for the cavalry. So the "Temporary combat charter of the cavalry of the Red Army" was born. The cavalry was recognized as an independent branch of

maneuver, the ability to attack in cavalry formation, stunning the enemy. Strong fire support and surprise were considered necessary conditions for the actions of the cavalry.

Undoubtedly, it was a product of collective creativity. Budyonny himself, of course, did not write it - it was mainly military staff officers who had not yet been completely expelled from the Red Army who worked on it. But at least Semyon Mikhailovich approved of it. What was proposed by the new charter fully corresponded to the realities of the 1920s. Although attacks in the equestrian formation even then could only be used against a weak enemy, like the Chinese and Afghans, who had almost no heavy weapons. Attacks against the defense, which possessed the firepower of at least the German army during the First World War, were a form of suicide. In the Civil War, of course, the density of guns and machine guns per kilometer of the front was many times less than in the First World War. Therefore, the cavalry felt at ease and claimed the role of the main striking force. However, given the great power potential that the Red Army might face in a new world war, the future war should have been more like World War I than Civil War. And in such a war, the cavalry could play only a purely auxiliary role. But Budyonny, who sincerely loved cavalry and horses, could not agree to this. He was going to include new armored units, if possible, in the composition of cavalry divisions and corps. More importantly, Voroshilov also shared the idea of close cooperation between tanks and cavalry, with the latter taking the organizational lead. And this hindered the organizational emancipation of the armored forces. Budyonny was also

entrusted with the inspection of stud farms. As a result of the Civil War, their number was significantly reduced and the cavalry lacked good horses. In terms of improving horse breeding, Budyonny proposed to allocate good breeding horses to the peasants so that they themselves would be interested in breeding them for army supplies. The proposal was adopted in the form of a unified state plan for the use of breeding material. For breeding

Thoroughbred horses peasants were allocated special loans.

Under the leadership of Budyonny in a number of regions of the country, herd-repair plants were created with the most advanced methods of breeding and raising horses at that time. Such horse breeding farms appeared in the Trans-Volga region, the Zadonsk steppes and a number of steppe regions of the Asian part of the country. All these measures led to the fact that the crisis in horse breeding, caused by a large loss of good horses during the Civil War and devastation, gradually passed. As a result, during the Great Patriotic War, the Red Army received more than three million first-class horses.

They were used not only and not so much for cavalry corps, but mainly for horse-drawn transport, on which the supply of troops was based, especially in the first two years of the war. Here Budyonny, of course, was doing his favorite thing and achieved some success. It is worth adding that the famous Budennov horse breed, bred at the Budyonny and First Horse stud farms founded by him in the Rostov region, is associated with his name. True, in fact, this breed appeared at the beginning of the

20th century. We must pay tribute to Semyon Mikhailovich: he tried to protect his subordinates in every possible way, even during the period of mass repressions. So, in 1938, Budyonny obtained from Stalin the release of almost all the directors of stud farms arrested by Yezhov. According to the third wife of Marshal Maria Vasilievna, "when they began to imprison the heads of stud farms - and they were mostly honored people, revolutionary fighters - Semyon Mikhailovich went to Voroshilov to protect them, he sent him to Stalin. Semyon Mikhailovich told how he said directly to Stalin's face: "Today they imprison those who defended the revolution. So, I need to be planted

too. And you. Stalin replied: "You, Semyon, have completely lost your mind." It is possible that Budyonny, as usual, added something to this conversation, but it remains a

he really saved the directors of stud farms from reprisal. In 1927, the opposition led by Trotsky and Zinoviev was finally crushed, its supporters were expelled from the army or removed from leadership positions. After that, Voroshilov, Budyonny and other representatives of the "cavalry" group, especially close to Stalin, launched an active struggle against a rival group led by Tukhachevsky. This grouping can be conditionally called "infantry". In the 1920s, the cult of Budyonny was born as the first checker of the republic, the son of a poor peasant, thanks to the opportunities provided by the Soviet government and the wise leadership of the Communist Party, who became one of the most prominent commanders of the Civil War.

Particularly contributed to the popularization of the image of Budyonny songs about the First Cavalry and its brave commander, which Semyon Mikhailovich himself was very fond of singing in a friendly feast. Along with the "March of Budyonny" to the words of D "Aktil, the "March of Budyonny" written in 1923 by the famous poet Nikolai Aseev was widely used (music for it was created by A. Davidenko):

From the midday sky  
heat - do not come near.  
Horse Budyonny spread  
out in the steppe.

Not the sons of mothers in  
a landowner's house, we  
grew up in a flame, in a powder  
smoke.

And our brood is not rich in  
ancient glory -  
pouring lava  
learned from the enemy.

Let the gentlemen not brag  
about landing at a gallop -  
we will often sweep their  
squadron into flour at a trot.

White will be remembered  
how the grass rustles  
when the cavalry rushes

workers and peasants.

Everything that is a small bird  
winds on the way,  
in front of a sharp checker  
to the side, fly.

We do not start a fight,  
but, remembering  
Perekop, we always keep  
clips for white skulls.

Let the bridles tinkle with  
the memory of him, -  
so let's trample every reptile  
with a horse.

No one will take back the path  
passed back, Horse  
Budyonny, the army -  
forward!

Later, in 1927, Nikolai Aseev wrote another song about the  
Budennovites - "First Horse" (music by the same A. Davidenko),  
much less successful:

Only the edge of heaven will be  
covered with a red-  
hot border. To fly to me,  
Budyonnovtsy, To the Don home.

CHORUS:

Black horse, Do  
not stand under me,  
Fly, creep along the Don side without rest. Run, run,  
Voronko,

A good side, Gray,  
dune, Flicker over  
the clearing. Grey, brown,  
fly like a storm!

While they are silent without  
shouting In the steppes  
of the gyrfalcon, In the distant Salsky  
district, the Fighters cannot be counted.

Look, now spacious What  
fields, And it  
was under Kastorna

Crowded, dusty.

The days are stingy and late, Thick  
evenings, And  
all the collective farmers  
were Fighters yesterday.

You give us your  
protection, Country,  
entrust us, Our blow is  
calculated, The blades are hot.

This song did not catch on with the people. But Aseevsky's  
"March of Budyonny", like several other cavalry songs, outlived  
Budyonny himself and was performed until the very end of the  
Soviet era. These songs included "Kon-Army", created in 1935 by  
the poet Alexei Surkov and the skilled Pokrass brothers:

On the military road  
Went in struggle and anxiety  
Fighting eighteenth year. There  
were short fees, From the  
Kuban to the Volga We  
raised the horses on a campaign.

Amid the heat and dust  
Budyonny and I went trotting  
on big things. Over humpbacked  
mounds, Over river rifts Our  
loud glory has passed.

On the Don and in Zamosc  
White bones are  
smoldering, Winds are rustling over  
the bones. The chieftain  
dogs remember, The Polish  
pans remember Our Cavalry blades.

If new wars are pouring into our  
calm region With heavy  
machine-gun rain, - On the roads of  
acquaintances For our  
beloved people's commissar  
We will lead the fighting horses!

In March 1926, Budyonny received a very responsible task. Stalin summoned him and pleased him with the news that the Central Committee of the party decided to send its representative to Central Asia for the "final solution" of the issue of the struggle against the Basmachi that had remained since the Civil War. The party took into account the great experience of Semyon Mikhailovich in the liquidation of the Makhnovists in the Ukraine and the Cossack rebel detachments in the Don and the North Caucasus. The party order had to be carried out immediately. On March 27, Budyonny arrived in Tashkent, where he met with the commander of the Turkestan Front, K. A. Avksentevsky, and the head of the political department of the front, H. N. Kuzmin. Semyon Mikhailovich gave them a fair scolding for the weak staging of the fight against the Basmachi. He demanded the abandonment of individual operations carried out at large intervals of time and did not give any effect in the fight against mobile and well-versed Basmachi detachments. Budyonny insisted on conducting one large-scale operation in order to put an end to the Basmachi in three to four months. On March 29, 1926, Budyonny visited the Kulyab, Vakhsh and Gissar garrisons, as well as the city of Termez near the Afghan border. Upon his return to Tashkent, Semyon Mikhailovich demanded that operations be carried out not by scattered and combined detachments, but by whole units and subunits - brigades, regiments, squadrons. Basmachi should be cut off from supply bases and involve the local population in the fight against them, without stopping at taking hostages and mutual responsibility. An amnesty was promised to ordinary Basmachi who stopped fighting. Budyonny personally participated in armed clashes with the Basmachi. Journalist Alexander Shchelokov described the causes and consequences of Budyonny's urgent business trip as follows: "Moscow was irritated by the postponed military operation in the Surkhandarya region, during which the final liquidation of the most active Basmachi formations was planned. Voroshilov, already People's Commissar for Military and Naval Affairs, demanded an urgent explanation. On March 23, 1926, a member of the Revolutionary Military C

The Revolutionary Military Council of the USSR detailed report. It reported that a combined action was planned, that is, a military action in combination with the holding of Soviet-party-economic events in the Surkhandarya region, and then in Tajikistan. Moreover, the entire operation to seize accomplices must be accompanied and concluded by military pressure on Khuram-Bek and Ibrahim-Bek, the two leaders who remained with us. For the purpose of military pressure on the units located in Tajikistan and the Surkhandarya region, two regiments of strategic cavalry were allocated. The command was entrusted to one of the best experts on local conditions in agreement with Sr. Az. Bureau, the Uzbek government and the Tajik government - comrade Melkumov. However, when the preparations were completed, it turned out that the operation coincided with the Muslim post, and therefore the Central Committee of the Communist Party (b) of Uzbekistan decided to postpone it. The leadership of the Turkestan Front did not consider it possible to act independently, without civilian authorities. Moscow was clearly not satisfied with the explanation... It seemed that the commander of the Turkfront, Konstantin Avksentievskiy, lacked decisiveness and toughness. Budyonny was supposed to give these qualities to the actions of the troops. In the presence of members of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Front, according to Todorsky, he said to Avksentevsky: "You will never solve problems here if you continue to talk. Don't be afraid of blood. If we in the Center were afraid of her, then Antonov's gangs would still roam the Tambov region "... It was considered unreasonable to doom the Ferghana Valley, where several dozen criminals robbed villages, to an "exemplary" punitive action. But in the Surkhandarya region, two fairly large Basmachi gangs operated at once - Khuram-Bek and Ibrahim-Bek. Their long existence was ensured by the proximity of the Afghan border, where, in case of danger, the Basmachi left, from where they received reinforcements and weapons ... reporting documents



called the "shock campaign". I must say that for the Basmachi she did not become unexpected. "If we compare our agents with those of Khuram and Ibrahim-Bek," Avksentievskiy said at one of the meetings, "the first one is worthless." The main part of the detachment of Ibrahim-Bek, together with the leader, left in advance for Afghanistan. However, combat reports without mentioning Budyonny later reported that 21 kurbashi and 866 zhigits were liquidated during the "shock campaign", despite the fact that before that intelligence had counted no more than 300 of them in that area. If the military result of Budyonny's efforts was not so great, then the organizational turned out to be quite significant. Semyon Mikhailovich drew attention to the low effectiveness of the actions of the Turkestan Front. In 1925, there were 875 clashes with the Basmachi, but the losses of the latter amounted to only 164 killed and 20 captured. It turned out that in 80 percent of the battles, the Basmachi did not suffer any damage at all. Budyonny immediately suggested renaming the Turkestan Front into a military district, since the word "front" in peacetime did not sound very good for the Soviet government, especially internationally. What then is Central Asia a springboard for the spread of the world revolution to the countries of the East, if one has to hold a whole front there to fight the local population? And on June 4, shortly after Budyonny returned to Moscow, the Turkestan Front was officially transformed into the Central Asian Military District. Budyonny also insisted on involving the Central Asian peasants in the fight against the Basmachi. In fact, they were tied with mutual responsibility for the actions of the Basmachi, without stopping even before taking hostages. Since many Basmachi after the raid themselves turned into peaceful dehkans, Budyonny, according to legend, ordered when entering the villages to undress the suspicious and see if there was a rifle mark on his shoulder and if his ass was red, because he spent the whole night in the saddle. And if there were any, then they were shot on the spot. Even if this is a legend, it is quite eloquent. After this business trip in Central Asia, mothers frightened children

Militarily, the Basmachi were not a very strong opponent. They experienced an acute shortage of ammunition, did not have heavy weapons and were not trained in the tactics of modern combat, since the inhabitants of Central Asia were not subject to conscription into the imperial army. Therefore, the vast majority of them did not participate in the First World War and were not even familiar with modern weapons. The main strength of the Basmachi was a good knowledge of the terrain and mobility (many had spare horses). Therefore, only cavalry detachments could effectively fight the Basmachi. And it was there, in Central Asia, where the remarkable cavalry tactician could deploy. In general, it must be admitted that, although the losses of the Basmachi were significantly exaggerated due to the "minor accomplices" of the Basmachi, their relatives and completely innocent hostages, after the operation carried out by Budyonny, the Basmachi on the territory of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan began to decline. Budyonny, as a person with no connection with Central Asia, was not going to reckon with the religious feelings and traditions of the indigenous population, but focused only on strength. That's why they sent him because they expected from the commander of the First Cavalry the cruelty that the local commanders, one way or another dependent on the population, were not capable of. After the operation, people were intimidated and were already afraid to help the Basmachi. The land and water reform of 1925-1929 also played its role, undermining the positions of large landowners and attracting part of the dekhkans to the side of the Soviet government. For the "shock campaign" against the Basmachi, Budyonny was awarded the Order of the Red Banner of Labor of the Uzbek SSR. A new surge of Basmachism occurred in the early 1930s, when complete collectivization came to Central Asia. But it never reached its former height. They coped with it now without Budyonny. It must be said that Semyon Mikhailovich spent only a month and a half in Central Asia - from March 27 to May 11, 1926, when he already participated in the next meeting of the Revolutionary Military Council in Moscow.

Upon returning to Moscow, Budyonny readily got involved in new skirmishes with the "infantrymen". On April 16, 1928, the commander of the Belarusian Military District A.I. Egorov, the Red Army cavalry inspector S.M. army. "The headquarters of the Red Army," they wrote, "has within itself the tendency, if not worse, the target setting, to replace itself, or rather, to take over the leading role in all matters of construction and the operational leadership of the Red Army." The authors of the letter proposed to replace the chief of staff of the Red Army with a person with "higher organizational skills, as well as with extensive experience in combat practical work." Their position was supported by the first deputy chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council of the USSR and People's Commissar I. Unshlikht, the head of the GURKKA M. Lewandovsky and the deputy head of the UVUZ of the Red Army N. Kuzmin (the latter's wife, curiously, was Tukhachevsky's mistress). As a result, Tukhachevsky lost his post as chief of staff of the Red Army and was sent to command the Leningrad Military District. Already after the rehabilitation of Tukhachevsky, in the 60s, Budyonny argued that "in the construction of the Red Army and specifically in the creation of armored forces, M.N. Tukhachevsky stubbornly stood in positions of relief by weakening the armor and arming them with light weapons. Not armor resistance and powerful fire, but "terrifying" mobility - he saw the main thing in this. In this case, Semyon Mikhailovich did not sin against the truth. Tukhachevsky was really fond of the number of tanks - to the detriment of quality. And besides, he got excited about the idea of \u200b\u200bcreating tractor tanks that could be used in agriculture in peacetime. If this idea were implemented, it would turn out machines that are not suitable for plowing or for combat. Perhaps even then an anecdote about the "Soviet peacefully plowing tractor" was born, ready to repulse the aggressors at any moment.

At the insistence of Stalin, Budyonny graduated from the military academy. Already after the Great Patriotic War, Semyon

Mikhailovich said: "I had a difficult childhood. Both grandfather and father worked hard. I didn't have to study at school, I learned to read and write by myself. But when the White Guards were defeated, the Soviet government did everything so that we could learn. And in 1932 I graduated from the Frunze Military Academy. At 48, Budyonny made his first parachute jump - this was required of graduates of the academy. Stalin criticized Budyonny for this, saying that for security reasons it was forbidden for leaders of this level to even drive a car themselves, and not just jump with a parachute. But, having learned that this is included in the course of study

at the academy, he stopped being angry. It is worth adding here that Budyonny studied in a special group, without interrupting his main duties in the Cavalry Inspectorate, and it is unlikely that the teachers risked putting deuces and even triples to the future marshal. By the way, in addition to special subjects, Semyon Mikhailovich studied the Russian language, literature, mathematics, history and geography

at the academy for the first time in the volume of secondary school. The former Soviet war correspondent for Izvestia, Mikhail Solovyov, who had to write speeches for Budyonny more than once, was taken prisoner by the Germans during the war years, and after the war he emigrated to the United States. He remained of the worst opinion about Semyon Mikhailovich - both as a commander and as a person. Solovyov argued: "We can be very lenient in establishing a mandatory minimum of knowledge for generals, but still they must be able to solve an equation with one unknown.

Meanwhile, for Marshal Budyonny, for example, who graduated from a military academy and writes books on military topics, such an equation lies beyond the limits of his mathematical knowledge.

The same Solovyov gives the following sketch of

Budyonny's life in the 30s: "No one, not even Stalin, could determine where his (Budyonny's. - **B.S.**) real place was. The mustachioed commander could be seen in various positions in the military administrations. Once, for some reason, they decided that Budyonny, since he com

horse breeding, and sent him to the post of head of the horse breeding department of the People's Commissariat of Agriculture. But soon he had to be removed from there. Budyonny told reporters about this episode at the Moscow Press House. At the new post, Budyonny was again unlucky. The horses, as if out of spite, began to die in exorbitant numbers. It was the time of the formation of collective farms, terrible not only for people, but also for agricultural livestock. "They didn't feed the horses on the collective farms, why would they live," Budyonny said. Once Stalin called him to his place. "Well, I think, hold on, prepare a forelock," he narrated. "I come, and they bring the servant of God Semyon to Stalin. And I have complete uncertainty in my legs. Do you understand?" "I understand," I say. "I've been accustomed to this since childhood." "And the horses will die," Stalin says quietly. "The devil knows," I say, "why they die. they were painted - how much hay and oats to give, how to drink, etc. - But the horses still die, - Stalin says again. - You are sending them instructions in vain. They do not understand writing, they need food. Does he have cattle? How many in the north? In the south? In the west? I see Iosif Vissarionovich is angry, and I begged here: let me go back to the army. I have no strength. There are more than two hundred employees in the department and everyone writes and writes They write. All day long I do nothing but sign. I myself understand that you can't feed horses with instructions, but where can I get hay if they don't procure it locally! Stalin listened to me and said: "Yes, we must pity you. And pity the horses." I called Voroshilov and I returned to the army ". Of all the Soviet commanders, with the exception of Voroshilov, Budyonny was the most prominent. The cunning Cossack very jealously guarded his popularity. By nature, he is not speechless, but hardly anyone else can compare with him according to the number of speeches delivered, he spoke to students of Moscow higher educational institutions and to children in the Palace of Pioneers.

His mustachioed face appeared in the newly opened maternity hospital for factory workers and at the Moscow hippodrome before the start of the races. He is a constant speaker at congresses in the Kremlin. The tongue-tied talkativeness of Budyonny worried me only because it to some extent poisoned my life. Before each performance of his boss, Budyonny's adjutant looked for me and warned me: - You are ordered to be at seven zero-zero. I had to drag myself somewhere to the outskirts of the city, where Budyonny made his next speech. After waiting for its end, I returned to the editorial office. The phone rang late at night. I was waiting for him. He knew that Budyonny would not calm down until he found out whether it would be written in the newspaper about his speech. The conversation went something like this: "Well, how did you like my speech?" Budyonny asked. - Good speech. Did you write it all down? - All (usually I did not write down anything). What page will it be printed on tomorrow? - Will not print. The editor says you shouldn't be speaking at such an unimportant meeting. "Listen, tell your editor it's not his place to tell me. If tomorrow the speech is not published, I will transfer this question to the Central Committee of the Party. It's clear?"

Budyonny rattled the receiver on the lever, and I trudged to the editor, and after tearful requests, he agreed to turn over the fourth page in order to gain thirty lines to report on Budyonny's speech. In his public speeches, Budyonny almost always played the role of an old grunt. He learned this role for the rest of his life and did not retreat from it. He spoke for a long time and habitually about horses. It was part of the learned role. Speaking once at a meeting on physiology at the USSR Academy of Sciences, he taught academicians how to clean, feed and water horses, and demanded to "invent" such a stable so that the horses would have

"light, warm and fun."

Budyonny's speeches very often appeared in the press, quite literate and not even devoid of brilliance. Budyonny's tongue-tied tongue could not prevent this, since the technology of "combing" speeches was unusually developed in Soviet propaganda. This is how, for example, Budyonny's speech on the development of animal husbandry was born, which will probably be included in the posthumous edition of the marshal's works (such a collection never appeared. Even the fourth volume of The Path Traveled, which tells about the events of the Great Patriotic War, was published only in fragments in the Don magazine,

but has not yet been published as a separate book. - **B.S.**).

During congresses in the Kremlin, a special group of employees is created, the purpose of which is to process the transcripts.

In 1934, I was involved in such a group. As a beginner in this kind of business, my comrades slipped me the heaviest transcripts. Once they put a recording of Budyonny's speech on the table. It took up ten pages. I read the transcript once, read the second, but did not understand anything. Something indistinct was said about the horses and that we would beat the enemy in the Stalinist way. Further, Budyonny made an excursion into the past, but it was so confused that there was no way to figure it out. During the break between meetings, I made the rounds of the congress delegates I knew, but did not find a single one who could coherently convey the content of Budyonny's speech. There was nothing to do but rewrite this speech. An animal husbandry specialist called in from the People's Commissariat

of Agriculture and I set to work. Two hours later the job was done.

But in order to complete it, it was necessary to get a signature on the "transcript". In the evening I went to Budyonny and was introduced into his spacious office. Heavy leather

furniture. Huge desk. The exemplary order on its shiny surface suggested that this table was not used for work. A large bookcase filled with books with the unchanging complete works of Lenin in black embossed binding. Loud voices came from the next room. Free evenings B

Budyonny entered in an unbuttoned tunic and with some difficulty understood the reason for my appearance. He sank into a deep armchair, crossed his arms over his chest, and in a tone of melancholy resignation ordered to read. After our processing, Budyonny's speech occupied four pages and it took a quarter of an hour to read. When I finished, I turned my eyes to Budyonny. He was sleeping peacefully with his head resting on his chest. Walking around the table, I shook him by the shoulder. He woke up and looked at me in confusion. Then he remembered and reached for the "transcript". "You haven't fixed anything, I see," he said in a hoarse voice.

- Did I turn down a good speech? I assured Budyonny that the speech was quite good and, having added the words: "Hurrah to the Great Stalin!" at his request, I received his sweeping signature.

Budyonny always develops vigorous activity, but this is a special kind of activity from which no one expects anything. Marshal's business potential is zero. For many years he served as inspector general of the Red Army cavalry. His peaceful and quiet sitting in the inspection of the cavalry, in which the young and talented S. Vetrogradsky, who later died in the Tukhachevsky case, was in charge of all affairs, was diversified by frequent speeches and even more frequent violent feasts with friends. Budyonny has always been clear, understandable and boring.

But one day he struck me unusually. For a week, I went daily to the cavalry inspection, and each time Budyonny's stupid adjutant informed me, for some reason in a whisper, that Budyonny was "still reading." At the same time, the young officer rolled his eyes and began to look like a frightened owl. Budyonny's behavior was so unusual, so amazing, that the news of this spread throughout the entire newspaper fraternity in Moscow. Budyonny read Shakespeare. Among us, this occupation has caused complete confusion of minds. Why did this suddenly "lead Semyon Mikhailovich to Shakespeare"? So it would have remained a mystery if Budyonny himself had not helped solve the puzzling problem. Once, when I entered the cavalry inspection, Budyonny beckoned me into his office. On his



A volume of Shakespeare lay open on the desk, open to the last page of Hamlet.

Budyonny put his small hand on the open book. "Here, I had a chance to read Hamlet in my old age," he said. - Well written, tramp. - Who wrote? I

asked. - Hamlet. He was a

Danish prince and spread all kinds of devilry there. But I

understood that Budyonny had not called me in order to praise the "writer Hamlet", who approvingly called him a vagabond.

- Listen, how do you understand the expression "hamletized pig"?

Budyonny suddenly asked. "I read the whole book, but I didn't find anything about piglets in it. It

turned out that Budyonny read Shakespeare's "Hamlet" only

because one of the high-ranking leaders called him a

"hamletized pig." He wanted to know if it was meant as an insult.

Frankly speaking, it is difficult to pick up a more successful definition

of Budyonny. Budyonny loved to live with all his might,

completely without thinking about the fact that in the sea of

poverty and deprivation that flooded the country, his wide life

contains something piglike. But at the same time, having drunk,

Budyonny fell into world sorrow of a very definite shade.

Once in the Kremlin, at some ordinary banquet, he,

smearing drunken tears down his face, lamented the fate of the

world proletariat. On another occasion, he was sympathized

with the victims of an earthquake, and he shouted that

everyone should go to the aid of the Japanese workers, under

whom "the earth is shaking." "Hamletized pig" - very

suitable

for Budyonny. The Moscow Press House, located in the

mansion of Savva Morozov not far from Arbatskaya

Square, was chosen by many as a pastime. There were

cozy rooms for intimate meetings in this house, an excellent

restaurant, helpful footmen. Often appeared in it and

Budyonny, who loved to be in the company of newspaper

people. As far as I can remember, such meetings with Budyonny at the press h

ended with choral singing. Somewhere in the back room, Budyonny's tenor suddenly soared, and after him stretched an awkward chorus of male voices. Invariably, after singing, Budyonny told reporters: "Well, you sing badly, comrades, not like we have in the army." And almost with the same invariance he added: "For example, I sang with Chaliapin himself." And then there was a story about how Chaliapin, during the famine in Moscow, was invited to Budyonny's carriage and how the three of them - Budyonny, Voroshilov and Chaliapin himself - sang Volga songs. "And when Fyodor Ivanovich left, we presented him a ham baked in dough." At that time of famine, this was a considerable reward, and, it seems, F.I. Chaliapin recalled it more than once. Budyonny especially loves to sing songs about himself. A dashing song often rang out from his house, sung by many male voices:

*No one will take away the path we have traveled, We  
are Budyonny's equestrian division, forward.*

And when this song, in a folk arrangement, displayed a permanent half-starvation in the country, then Budyonny and its new version accepted:

*Comrade Voroshilov, after all, the war is on the  
nose, And Budyonny's equestrian went to the sausage.*

Budyonny sang this song and exclaimed enthusiastically: "Budyonnovskaya army for sausage! Here are the bastards!" The word "bastards" in his vocabulary sounded like praise. Budyonny seemed to me for a long time a comic phenomenon and did not evoke any special feelings in me - neither love nor hatred. My mindset at that time was characterized by inner isolation from the world in which my work proceeded. This was not yet a denial of this world, but only a subconscious feeling of its randomness and uselessness ... It would be fashionable to say that I was already an anti-communist then, but that would be a fashionable lie. For me

it was a period of growing doubts, and to be truthful, it must be said that I was then looking for means of dispelling these doubts and gaining a serene faith that everything was going well and the way it should go. The fact that I did not kill these doubts in myself, but that they later led me to an extreme, boundless denial of communism, is of very little merit. It's just that life has exposed the ulcers of communist existence and made even those who were not

looking for insight see the light. Budyonny also contributed to this insight to some extent. While I saw his noisy life, I could perceive him in a comic way. But after the shot... However, it is worth talking about this in more detail, since the episode that ended with a shot at a defenseless woman is Genghis Khanism in its most frank form. Budyonny was married. His wife, a simple Cossack woman, idolized her Semyon. She went with him through the civil war, and many wounds on the bodies of soldiers and commanders were bandaged by her in the hospital. After the civil war, Budyonny showed a greedy need for a different, more attractive life. Sprees and women became his need.

The wife put up with a lot, hoping that Semyon would "ferment" her. Slowly ran to the church in Bryusovsky Lane to pray for her husband. Sometimes humility was replaced in her by violent protest, and then ugly scandals were played out. Once the heart of Budyonny was captivated by a cashier from the Kursk railway station in Moscow. This woman later became his wife. The hobby turned out to be more serious and longer than all the former ones before. Budyonny's wife stoically endured this next grief, until Budyonny himself called her to an open rebellion. On a winter evening, when another company gathered for a revelry, Budyonny was inflamed with a desire to show his beloved to his friends and ordered the adjutant to bring her to the house. Budyonny's wife could not endure such humiliation. With scolding and crying, she ran out of the room, and Budyonny,

pale with rage, came out after her. A shot was heard from the guests. The murder of Budyonny's wife laid bare the true face of Budyonny before

reappeared, forgiven by Stalin, I already saw in him not so much a comic as a tragic phenomenon in our life. After all, in reality, it is terrible to live in a country where all this can happen and where Budyonny goes to the marshals, and Stalin and Malenkov are the leaders. On

this we can finish our story about Budyonny. The black mustache is fake. They have long gone gray and dyed by a hairdresser. A stern frown is a deception, because behind the severity there is a pitiful fear of losing a high place in old age. The golden embroidery of the marshal's uniform, the gold and diamonds of orders, all the radiance emanating from him, cannot hide the miserable appearance of a slave marshal harnessed to the chariot of the communist dictatorship and aged in this harness. The criticism is harsh and, it seems, not entirely fair. Let's start with the fact that Stalin did not at all remove Budyonny from horse breeding. On the contrary, in 1947 he appointed the Marshal Deputy Minister of Agriculture for Horse Breeding and Breeding. So, at least in this area, the activities of Budyonny Stalin suited. Moreover, during the period of collectivization, there really was nothing to feed the horses. Yes, and Semyon Mikhailovich, I think, fell into world sorrow not only about the world proletariat and the victims of the earthquake in Japan, but also in connection with the fate of his native peasantry. Another thing is that this grief did not go beyond drunken tears.

As for the murder of his first wife by Budyonny, Solovyov clearly conveys not the story of Semyon Mikhailovich himself (he would not have boasted like that, even in a drunken state), but the rumors that circulated in the capital's journalistic get-together. As we will see later, the case with the death of Nadezhda Ivanovna's first Budyonnovsk wife (her maiden name has not yet been clarified) is rather obscure, but the most likely version of her death is still suicide. The official version, in order not to offend Budyonny, reduced the whole thing to an accident, and the rumor - to the murder of a disgusted wife by a dashing army commander, who prevented her from merging in ecstasy with her mistress. But, as it seems, Semyon Mikhailovich was not hot enough to shoot his wife in the presence of a whole bunch of people. Yes,

It was easy with my wife. But the fact that the suicide of Nadezhda Ivanovna was preceded by a major scandal with her husband seems quite probable. Here Solovyov's story may well reflect the truth. But, as we will see later, Budyonny's second wife was a Bolshoi Theater singer, and not at all a cashier from the Kursk railway station, although she was indeed born in the Kursk province.

At the same time, Solovyov, it seems, noticed a lot in Budyonny correctly. Semyon Mikhailovich was painfully conceited, extremely tongue-tied, and poorly able to organize clerical and staff work. He had not too wide erudition and horizons. He liked to sit with friends on the First Cavalry, drink, sing songs. He was no longer seriously involved in military affairs. In general, in many respects it corresponded to the level of jokes about himself. Only now Budyonny was not a coward. He was simply cunning and, in everyday terms, a very prudent person. He understood that speaking out against Stalin was like spitting against the wind. And dutifully signed execution sentences. And when the sentences concerned his personal enemies, then, perhaps, he accepted them even with enthusiasm. The émigré writer Mark Aldanov, looking at Budyonny in Soviet newsreel footage from the early 1930s, described him in his essay "Soviet People" with much more sympathy: "Famous Budyonny! It is remarkable, this ancient, soil image, unknown to the West. This is something authentic at a masquerade: a real soldier among workers in general's uniforms. Budyonny surprisingly does not look like an internationalist and a "builder of the future." An artist who would like to give illustrations for War and Peace could use him to paint Danila arriving on his way ... I would give dearly to look at Budyonny during a meeting of the Third International or listen to his political conversation, for example, with Karl Radek. It was said that, while driving through Red Square, Semyon Mikhailovich was secretly baptized at the Kremlin churches. That did not prevent him, I note, by no means in a Christian way to crush "foreigners" in Central Asia.

True, they still did not throw him into collectivization in punitive actions against F

Maybe they still feared that Semyon Mikhailovich would not put pressure on his men so easily? Don't think. Something, but Budyonny was never afraid to shed blood. But using him as a punisher could seriously destroy the Budyonnovsky myth. It is one thing to destroy the Basmachi and their accomplices on the outskirts of the empire, in distant Central Asia, for whose inhabitants the name Budyonny is still an empty phrase. And it is completely different to force him to go with fire and sword through the native Russian, Ukrainian or Kuban provinces. There, such a memory will quickly destroy the image of Budyonny as a "defender of the people." Probably, the intellectual Aldanov still had some illusions that, unlike the "internationalists" and "builders of the future", the God-fearing peasant son Semyon Budyonny would still be able, what the hell is not joking, to play the role of a sort of "red Bonaparte". It was not for nothing that ideas were expressed in the emigrant press that if Budyonny was given the rank of general and the Order of St. Anne of the 1st degree, then he would probably play the role of the new General Monk and pave the way for the restoration of the Romanov dynasty. But Mikhail Solovyov, who had to come into close contact with the legendary army

commander, had no illusions about him. The popularity of Budyonny was used to justify the idea of collectivization in the eyes of the people. On February 19, 1933, he spoke at the 1st Congress of Collective Farm Shock Workers in support of the Stalinist course. And on April 26 of the same year, Pravda published Stalin's congratulations to Budyonny in connection with the anniversary: "To a comrade-in-arms in the civil war, organizer and driver of the glorious Red cavalry, the most talented nominee of revolutionary peasants to the leadership of the Red Army, comrade Budyonny, on the day of his fiftieth birthday - hot Bolshevik

hello! I firmly shake your hand, dear Semyon Mikhailovich. It must be said that even after the condemnation of the "cult of personality" at the XX Party Congress, Budyonny never made a public criticism of Stalin. She is not in the memoirs The Path Traveled, the first vo

Semyon Mikhailovich also did not say a word about the repressions - partly, probably, because he himself was involved in them. In 1933, in connection with collectivization, another song appeared about Budyonny and the Budyonny people, modestly called "Song of the Heroes", which certainly replenished, among other things, the repertoire of Budyonny feasts. It was created by the same A. Davidenko with B. Shekhter (music) and the poet N. Vladimirsky (lyrics):

As in the green steppe,  
Where Budyonny roared,  
Where a song was sung with  
battle for the power of the  
Soviets, They lay down,  
fell asleep Under the damp  
ground, Beveled by a  
bullet, October heroes.

CHORUS:

Eh, not without reason, eh, not  
without reason, Fighting for the  
hammer and sickle, In the attacks of the  
Budyonnovsk armies Their blood was shed on the fields.

Over the bones of the fallen  
Weeds do not grow, Do not  
scatter the ashes Winds,  
hurricanes. By the power  
of everyday Tractors,  
the columns Plow the land  
in our friendly collectives.

No, the military work  
has not weakened,  
The tall wheat will be  
earring. We are in the  
green steppe, Where the  
heroes fought, With a  
tractor column, we will triple  
the harvest.

Army united, multi-million We  
continue the path of their  
revolutionary. Hey, get to  
work! So that the whole  
steppe buzzed with a  
formidable defense

In our collective farm crop!

The authors of the song, of course, did not specify that during the period of collectivization, blood was also shed very plentifully. Thousands of peasants were shot for resisting "excesses", hundreds of thousands died in exile and camps, millions perished from starvation. It seems that, to one degree or another, Budyonny knew about the consequences of collectivization. But he was well aware that opposing collectivization was mortally dangerous. And he was not at all going to share the fate of the leaders of the right opposition, who opposed the accelerated pace and violent methods of involving peasants in "socialist forms of management." And Stalin appreciated the loyalty of his comrade-in-arms. At the XVII Congress of the CPSU (b) in 1934, Budyonny was elected a candidate member of the Central Committee, and Voroshilov, in turn, became a member of the Politburo. Speaking at this "congress of victors," Semyon Mikhailovich, in particular, stated: "Our party has won and smashed to smithereens all our enemies who hindered us on the path to the implementation of the general line, prevented the millions of people, led by the party, from fighting for the construction of socialism in our country. . Of course, the opposition platforms, which were presented as leaders of both right and "left" opportunism, led the line towards the restoration of capitalism in our country. If, more than hoped, they had succeeded in turning our party to that line, we would have long since been drawn into the war. In short, for us Bolsheviks, who are fighting for the implementation of the general line of our Party under the brilliant leadership of our great leader, Comrade Stalin, it is clear where we would have ended up if one or another platform of opportunism had won. Now, comrades, allow me to dwell on the question that Comrade Stalin put so sharply and point-blank—the question of animal husbandry. It must be said frankly that livestock breeding in our country did not enjoy sufficient attention throughout our work - both in the first five-year plan and in the first year of the second five-year plan. If today we check the workers in this industry, we will find there the most backward people, I would say, both in the



industrial qualification. I am well acquainted with agriculture, since I am always connected with it... The question of animal husbandry, raised here by Comrades Stalin and Voroshilov, gives every reason for all of us to think carefully about it. After all, the horse in no way can be opposed to the development of our vehicles and other machines. So you can't argue. You just need to combine these two things. The machine does the hard work, the horse does the light work. The car and the horse, thus, complement each other, and do not crowd out. Consider, comrades, the fact that in 1929 our industry had 400,000 horses, but now it has no less than 1,200,000 horses. How can this be explained? The matter is explained very simply: it is explained by the rise of industry and the sound economic sense of our business executives. Our cities take horses in order to do better work in combination with the automobile. At close range, the car is unprofitable, it is profitable only for long distances. But a horse at close range is cost-effective. Take the factory. It is necessary to import raw materials from warehouses, which are right there, close to the factory. Well, will you turn the car? Rubbish, you can't talk like that. And some think: let the fuel burn, is it a pity? And then they shout that we don't have it, we don't have enough of it. In addition, speaking of the tasks of developing animal husbandry, I consider it necessary that livestock farms have a permanent staff, a permanent staff of agronomists, a permanent staff of veterinarians and livestock specialists. Comrade Stalin said that we have a group of people - honest talkers. We have another group of people - connecting rods, who stagger around for a whole five-year period, do nothing and only ride on railways and get lifts. **(Stalin. Correct.) Budyonny.** He sits in one place, does business, and then moves to another place, and so he travels endlessly. **(Stalin. Correct.) Budyonny.** There is such a group. I believe that if a person has failed in one place, you need to say about it so that on a new

place knew about his mistakes. And if he repeats his mistakes, then it is not at all necessary to allow him to responsible work. It is very characteristic that in the keynote speech at the party forum (of course, it was not written by himself, but by a group of referents), Semyon Mikhailovich said almost nothing about the construction of the Red Army, but mainly covered issues of animal husbandry and horse breeding. In practice, Budyonny played the role of a supplier of horses for the Red Army more than one of its top commanders. When the illustrious hero of the Civil War, a marshal at five minutes, told the delegates about foaling and insemination during the breeding season, they must have been quite amused to listen to this. The party leaders quietly laughed at Semyon the grunt, who was now forced to breed horses. But he laughs best who laughs last. Budyonny was one of the few party members who calmly smiled into his luxurious, albeit tinted mustache, and at the next, XVIII Party Congress in 1939. And almost everyone who once laughed at him disappeared forever in the Lubyanka cellars. In 1936, Budyonny concluded the article "Fight more unitedly for the rise of horse breeding," written for the newspaper Sovetskaya Kirghizia, with the following words: "The central slogan of our work in the field of horse breeding should be the struggle for accelerated reproduction, for such a population of the republic as a horse, in which all collective farms, collective farmers, individual farmers and the state would be completely and completely satisfied. The horse is our faithful assistant in the battles for socialism, and no one has the right to forget about it, neglect it. The Stakhanovites, the Voroshilov cavalymen, the entire huge army of horse breeding workers, all the leaders of the Party and Soviet organizations must fight in the Bolshevik way for the advancement of horse breeding. Soviet Kyrgyzstan in the

development of horse breeding should be one of the most advanced republics in the Land of Soviets. Of course, the article was not written by Semyon Mikhailovich himself, who had neither the time nor literary abilities for such nonsense, but his referents. Ma

in a normal reader, passages like those quoted could only cause a smile. Or maybe the point here is simply in the style of the 30s, when such stamps were taken quite seriously by those who created them. Gradually, Budyonny also grew in the military hierarchy, but here his duties were mainly of a bureaucratic nature. In 1934, after the abolition of the Revolutionary Military Council and the transformation of the People's Commissariat for Military and Naval Affairs into the People's Commissariat of Defense, Budyonny, remaining a cavalry inspector, became a member of the Military Council under People's Commissar Voroshilov and chairman of the highest certification command commissions. The memoirs of G.K. Zhukov give a good idea of how Budyonny was perceived by the troops. In 1935, Budyonny personally arrived to present the Order of Lenin to the 4th Cavalry Division, commanded by Georgy Konstantinovich. Semyon Mikhailovich addressed the fighters with a speech on duty: "Be worthy of those who glorified your division during the Civil War. We still have many enemies, and we should be on the alert. The Order of Lenin is a reward for all your labors, but it calls you, comrades, to new deeds in the name of the interests of our labor republic ... "In his memoirs, Zhukov did not spare the irony: "S. M. Budyonny knew how to talk with soldiers and commanders. Of course, he himself did not conduct classes, exercises or staff games with personnel. But no one blamed him for it. Although, of course, this was a big minus in his activities. Apparently, they believed that Semyon Mikhailovich was now more of a political figure than

military."

## **Chapter Eight**

### **THE PRE-WAR YEARS**

November 20, 1935 Budyonny became one of the first five marshals of the Soviet Union, along with Voroshilov, Tukhachevsky, Yegorov and Blucher. In an article about the first marshals, the most prominent Soviet publicist Mikhail Koltsov spoke of Budyonny as follows: "A wonderful nugget, a national hero who rose

from the lower peasantry, Semyon Mikhailovich Budyonny, covered in legend - didn't his innate ability to lead huge horse masses write his name forever in history? At the February-March plenum of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks in 1937, Budyonny was a member of the commission that authorized the exclusion from the party and the arrest of N. I. Bukharin and A. I. Rykov. By the way, Yakir, who was a member of the same commission, voted not only for the arrest, but also for the execution of the former leaders of the opposition. When discussing the issue of Bukharin and Rykov, Budyonny spoke "in favor of expulsion, trial and execution," and in May 1937, when questioned about the exclusion from the party of M. N. Tukhachevsky and Ya. E. Rudzutak, he wrote: "Definitely - for. Need these bastards execute."

As you know, the prologue to the Tukhachevsky case was a quarrel during a banquet after the parade on May 1, 1936. Then, after a fair dose of strong drinks, Voroshilov, Budyonny and Tukhachevsky argued about old affairs: who was responsible for the defeat near Warsaw, and then very soon switched to the present. Tukhachevsky accused the former leaders of the cavalry that they were placing personally loyal cavalry commanders in responsible positions and creating their own group in the Red Army. Voroshilov irritably threw: "But don't they group around you?" Voroshilov spoke about what happened at the banquet, and then at the Politburo, on June 1, 1937, at an expanded meeting of the Military Council, entirely devoted to the "counter-revolutionary conspiracy" in the Red Army: "Last year, in the month of May, Tukhachevsky threw an accusation at my apartment me and Budyonny, in the presence of comrades. Stalin, Molotov and many others, in that I supposedly group a small group of people around me, I lead with them, direct the whole policy, etc. Then, on the second day, Tukhachevsky retracted everything that was said ... Comrade. Stalin then said that it was necessary to stop squabbling in private, it was necessary to arrange a meeting of the P.B. (Politburo) and at this meeting to analyze in detail what was the matter. And at this meeting, we analyzed all these issues and again came to the same result." Here Stalin retorted: "He abandoned his

accusations." "Yes," Voroshilov repeated, "I refused, although the group of Yakir and Uborevich at the meeting behaved rather aggressively towards me. Uborevich was still silent, but Gamarnik and Yakir behaved very badly towards me. In connection with the purge that had begun in the army, Stalin especially needed the support of his friends from the cavalry group. And he nominated Budyonny to one of the key posts. In May 1937, when the arrests of participants in the alleged "fascist military conspiracy" were in full swing, he proposed appointing Budyonny as commander of the troops of the Moscow Military District. By that time, Stalin's proposals had already become orders, and on June 6, a few days before the trial of Tukhachevsky, the marshal took up new duties with the release of the head of the cavalry inspection from his former position. The main role of Budyonny in the new post, of course, was to clean the district from the enemies of the people. The chief of staff of the Moscow Military District under Budyonny was Al Antonov, the future general of the army and chief of the General Staff. Probably, in fact, he decided all the operational issues of the district leadership. Semyon Mikhailovich, for the most part, checked the personnel for loyalty. On June 11, 1937, Budyonny, as part of the Special Judicial Presence, sentenced Tukhachevsky, Yakir, Uborevich, Kork and their comrades to death. In a note to Stalin about this process, Semyon Mikhailovich wrote: "Tukhachevsky tried to popularize before the audience present at the trial, as it were, his business considerations in the sense that he foresaw everything, tried to prove to the government that the situation that had arisen was leading the country to defeat and that supposedly no one listened. But tov. Ulrich, on the advice of some members of the Special Presence, interrupted Tukhachevsky and asked the question: how does Tukhachevsky link this motivation with what he testified at the preliminary investigation, namely, that he was connected with the German General Staff and worked as an agent of German intelligence since 1925. Then Tukhachevsky declared that, of course, he could also be considered a spy,

Budyonny also noted: "From the very beginning of the trial, when reading the indictment and at the testimony of all other defendants, Tukhachevsky shook his head, thereby emphasizing that, they say, the trial, and the investigation, and everything that is written in the indictment - all this not entirely true, not true. In other words, he stood in the pose of a misunderstood and undeservedly offended person, although outwardly he gave the impression of a person very confused and frightened. Apparently, he did not expect such a quick exposure of the organization, its withdrawal and such a quick investigation and trial ... "Budyonny knew that Tukhachevsky was going to remove him and Voroshilov from high posts, and saw him as his enemy. It is unlikely that Semyon Mikhailovich believed that Tukhachevsky was a conspirator and spy, the entire biography of Mikhail Nikolaevich forced this thesis to be called into question. True, after the rehabilitation of Tukhachevsky and others, Budyonny justified himself: "People during the investigation and at the trial confessed to the most terrible crimes! How could I not believe it." But in fact, Budyonny predetermined their fate before the trial, when he approved the arrest of

Tukhachevsky. And in court, as he once admitted, he simply carried out the will of Stalin. This recognition followed under the following circumstances. In the early 1960s, the military historian V. D. Polikarpov happened to be the editor of the second volume of Budyonnovsk memoirs, *The Path Traveled*. He recalled his meeting with the marshal in the following way:

"The adjutant, he is Budyonny's literary worker, Colonel Molodykh, with a deliberately serious look, as if warning: "Now he will ask you," he led us into a large hall lined with tables in the middle with the letter "T" . Towards, from behind a large desk, a short, decoratively cock-like man with a spreading mustache came out, shook hands with the first to walk, the head of the Military Publishing House, General Kopytin, then, in turn, his deputy Colonel Marinov, the editor-in-chief of the memoir edition, Colonel Zotov, and finally, me, then Lieutenant Colonel . - W

Following us, the second "literary worker" entered and also sat down at a long table - a retired cavalry colonel S. V. Chernov. - We must first report to you, Comrade Marshal, our first opinion, - began Kopytin, - and agree on further work on the manuscript ... - And what else is there to do? Everything is done there. It is so? the marshal turned to Chernov.

"As if they were trying..." he replied. -

Well, let the editor report ... - added Marinov. I took the written conclusion (it took up a little more than a page of typewritten text) and began to read clearly, with an accent in the right places.

Naturally, at first it was generally about the benefits of memoirs, especially those written by such major military leaders as Marshal Budyonny. This was taken for granted both by the author and his literary workers. My bosses took it easy, too. But things have come to the point that the manuscript gives a biased, moreover, incorrect characterization of such commanders and military figures as M. N. Tukhachevsky, I. E. Yakir, V. M. Primakov and other. The author could not come to terms with this. "But they are Trotskyists!" he exclaimed.

"They were Trotskyists insofar as they served under the command of Trotsky, chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic," I said. - In that case, someone has the right to classify you as a Trotskyist. After all, they served under his command? Did you follow his orders? And if you didn't, what would happen to you? - Well, yes!

What more! After all, they, together with Trotsky, wanted to destroy the red cavalry! - Budyonny did not let up. - And what about Primakov? He's a cavalryman, and what a! He also wanted to destroy the cavalry, or something ?! I couldn't keep silent. "Primakov is another matter," Budyonny continued. - Primakov I, oh, how I loved. This is a horseman so a horseman. And I wanted to protect him in any way. But when he himself, at the trial, admitted that he was a member of a counter-revolutionary organization and they intended to arrest the entire Kremlin, then what was left for me to do? Protect?

"But don't you know how self-incriminations were beaten out of the defendants? I asked. - It's easy to say now, but then ... - Comrade Marshal! - I switched to a higher note. "You cannot forget that you were one of the members of the court over these military leaders, and this decision of the court was canceled for lack of corpus delicti, and these persons were posthumously rehabilitated, and those who persecuted them were branded with shame. Wouldn't you have to justify yourself, admit your guilt? So, maybe it should have started with this manuscript, and not aggravated with it the past associated with the Military Collegium under the chairmanship of Ulrich? I saw how Kopytin and Marinov fixed their eyes on me, and Mikhail Mikhailovich Zotov encouraged me almost with a smile: come on, they say, come on, Vasya! "But you don't know how it all happened," Budyonny said. - And it happened like this: late in the evening Stalin called me at the dacha: so, they say, and so, tomorrow morning the Trotskyists-terrorists will be judged in the Military Collegium, and you, Semyon, should be there - a member of the court; Yes, look - do not give slack, they will have to be shot. What to do here? The Master's order is an order. "Well, you played it zealously," I remarked. "As expected," the marshal confirmed. - There is either a chest in crosses, or a head in the bushes. Isn't that understandable?" I think that in this conversation Semyon Mikhailovich was not cunning. It is indicative that he did not say a word about any folder with secret materials about the connections of the defendants with German intelligence. But Khrushchev himself spread rumors about such a folder, allegedly planted on Stalin by the Germans for provocative purposes. It would be very beneficial for Budyonny to refer in a conversation with an editor who was obviously not very friendly to him to this folder in order to somehow justify himself and convince Polikarpov and the other officers that then, in the 37th, he really believed in the guilt of Tukhachevsky and the others defendants. However, Budyonny did not mention any folder, which once again proves that it did not exist in nature (and it is not reflected in the case file either). Bu



he did not believe in the guilt of Tukhachevsky, but simply carried out Stalin's order, knowing full well that in case of refusal he himself would be among the participants in the "military fascist conspiracy." The experience of the Civil War, the fate of Dumenko and Mironov, the reprisal against all sorts of oppositions should have taught him how easily shooting cases are falsified. On August 29, 1937, making his contribution both to the fight against the enemies of the people and to the construction of the Red Army, Budyonny wrote to Voroshilov that in the Cavalry Inspectorate he "had to fight, of course, with the support of yours and comrade. Stalin, for the existence of cavalry ... since the enemies of the people in the person of Tukhachevsky, Levichev, Mezheninov and any other bastards who worked in the central apparatus, as well as with the help of Yakir and Uborevich, until the last moment, by all means sought to destroy such a kind in the system of the armed forces of our country troops like cavalry. The former commander of the First Cavalry objected "against any reorganization of the cavalry and its reduction." Kliment Efremovich tried to reason with Semyon Mikhailovich: "The cavalry was trained not by the enemies of the people, but by you and me, and you are more than me, since you were directly involved in this." And he warned that "the cavalry must and will be reduced," because, they say, these are the requirements of modern warfare. However, thanks to the special love of the former leaders of the Cavalry for the cavalry on the eve of the Great Patriotic War, the Red Army had nine cavalry and four mountain cavalry divisions, and during the war years their number even increased. At the same time, they were used directly at the front and suffered heavy losses during attacks on fortified positions. In the German army, by the beginning of World War II, there was only one cavalry division. True, in the future, the number of cavalry in the Wehrmacht increased, but mainly at the expense of national units - including those formed from the same Cossacks. Moreover, cavalry units were used mainly to fight partisans in the occupied territories. During the purge that began, criticism was expressed both a

fascist conspiracy" in their testimony called their names as accomplices. On January 22, 1938, at a meeting of the top command staff of the Red Army, Stalin stated: "Here, many comrades have already spoken about the dissatisfaction of Dybenko, Yegorov and Budyonny ... We are not opposed to comrades being dissatisfied with certain facts. Not in this case. It is important that they come and tell the Central Committee in time that they are dissatisfied with this and that... They are dissatisfied with the fact that they are supposedly being nominated so little. It is not right. We can be reproached for putting forward and popularizing such people as Budyonny, Yegorov and others too early or too much. We cannot be reproached for overwriting talented people." It is indicative, however, that among the names of the "arrogant" military leaders named by name, Yegorov and Dybenko were eventually shot, and Budyonny

did not even receive a reprimand. Stalin's speech was simply a prelude to the already predetermined arrest of Dybenko and Yegorov. On January 25, 1938, Stalin and Molotov signed a special resolution of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks and the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR on the fact of the "betrayal" of Dybenko, who commanded the Leningrad Military District. It was rightly noted that Dybenko "decayed morally and everyday ... gave a very bad example to his subordinates." But the main charge against him was "contacts with American representatives" - that is, the charge of espionage. The investigation was able to establish that Dybenko asked the Americans to financially help

his sister, who lived in the United States. After these "spy" requests, the sister began to receive benefits. The resolution also noted that Dybenko "instead of conscientiously fulfilling his duties in the leadership of the district, he systematically drank, decomposed in a moral and domestic respect ...". In a letter to Stalin, Dybenko denied drunkenness, but in a somewhat peculiar form: "The notes of the employees of the National Hotel contain a certain amount of truth, which lies in the fact that I sometimes, when acquaintances came to my hotel, allowed me to drink with them.

It's not like it's drunk. But Dybenko himself did not deny everyday decay. On February 19, he was summoned to Moscow, where, having been dismissed from the army, he was appointed deputy people's commissar of the forest industry. And already on February 26, he was arrested as a participant in the "military-fascist conspiracy", a Trotskyist and a German and US spy recruited back in 1915. During the investigation, which lasted five months, he "confessed" under torture both conspiracy and espionage, slandering, among others, the "conspirator" Budyonny ... On July 29, 1938, he was executed together with the commander of the USSR naval forces V. Orlov and five army commanders . The most surprising and unexpected was the fall of one of the prominent representatives of the cavalry group, Marshal A. I. Yegorov, a loyal Stalinist ally from the time of Tsaritsyn. Ruined Alexander Ilyich vanity and intemperance in the language, especially among "his own." But "ours" turned out to be "strangers". In October 37, Alexander Ilyich was nominated as a candidate for deputy of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR in the Vyazemsky constituency. Deciding that now there was nothing to be afraid of, Yegorov shared his sore with old friends from the First Cavalry - Deputy People's Commissar of Defense for Personnel E. A. Shchadenko and Head of the Financial and Planning Department of the Red Army A. V. Khrulev. This frankness turned out to be fatal for the marshal. Already in December 1937, shortly after Yegorov became a deputy of the Supreme Soviet and formally gained parliamentary immunity, the denunciations of Efim Afanasyevich and Andrei Vasilyevich lay on the table of Voroshilov. Two friends agreed that Yegorov, during a friendly dinner (they noted the appointment of Shchadenko as deputy people's commissar of defense, which followed at the end of November), expressed dissatisfaction with the fact that the history of the Civil War was covered incorrectly - he, Yegorov, was belittled, and the role of Stalin and Voroshilov was "undeservedly exalted ". Apparently, the military leaders drank too much that evening, Alexander Ilyich lost his vigilance, became emotional, opened up to his seemingly true friends, and irrevocably ruined himself. Maybe Shchadenko and Khrulev decided that the marshal was chea

he shares similar dangerous thoughts with other military leaders. Then it might turn out really bad. Someone else will denounce, and then during the investigation it will turn out that Yegorov had such a conversation with Shchadenko and Khrulev, but they did not denounce. So you can easily fall into the enemies of the people. The fate of Yegorov was decided. Stalin could not stand the post of first deputy people's commissar of defense and, in general, in the army and at liberty of a person who publicly praises him, and at a friendly feast expresses dissatisfaction that Stalin is too much praised, and even attributed to him (no doubt, with his consent ) Egorov's own merits in the Civil War. Alexander Ilyich could not have been shot less for this. Then everything went according to the standard scheme. Marshal was removed from the post of First Deputy People's Commissar and sent to command the Transcaucasian Military District. Then his wife Galina Tseshkovskaya was arrested as a "Polish spy" and, by known means, obtained evidence from her against her husband. On February 4, 1938, Yegorov arrived in Tbilisi to a new duty station, on February 25 he was dismissed from the army, on

March 27 he was arrested, and on February 23, 1939 he was shot. But Budyonny, even in a state of strong drunkenness, did not allow any dubious statements about Stalin and Voroshilov, therefore he remained safe and sound. True, during the investigation, Alexander Ilyich, realizing that he had nothing to lose and that yesterday's friends were not going to save him, gave detailed testimony against Budyonny. According to the disgraced marshal, Voroshilov's appointment to the post of people's commissar and his resignation from the post of commander of the armed forces of Ukraine and Crimea, he took it very painfully. "On the eve of Voroshilov's appointment," Egorov testified, "I talked with Budyonny, who, like me, was sharply hostile to Voroshilov, considering his appointment to be wrong, and my removal from the Red Army as a blow to him personally." "There was some bitterness of Budyonny against Voroshilov," Yegorov later recalled about the situation in the autumn of 1925, after the death of M.V. Fru

Voroshilov was a people's commissar, and that he was ready to kill him rather than accept this appointment.

Explaining these confidential conversations, Yegorov said: "An old friendship connected me with Budyonny since 1919 in Tsaritsyn. All our subsequent work until the end of the Civil War took place under the sign of complete harmony in personal relationships ... "Alexander Ilyich also told that in 1926 P.E. Dybenko joined their "group". "Dybenko called Budyonny a 'general without an army', 'unsuccessful Murat', which set Budyonny against Voroshilov even more... So, during 1925–1927, our 'troika' was formed," Yegorov wrote in his own handwritten testimony. Dybenko dutifully confirmed Yegorov's confessions: "After the death of Frunze, the question of a new people's commissar arose, and a struggle arose again between various groups in the army for the promotion of their candidates to this post ... My rapprochement with Yegorov and Budyonny ... My support for Yegorov and Budyonny brought us closer ... we were even called a triumvirate in the army. Recalling his relationship with the named military leaders, Dybenko stated: "While in Moscow, I visited Yegorov at his apartment or met with him at Budyonny." Dybenko, according to him,

brought together with Budyonny and Yegorov the commonality of military-political views: "In the period of 1926, our group was formed and we began to select our supporters in the army, at first under the flag of a group struggle against Voroshilov ..." This group allegedly included two more military leader - M. K. Levandovsky, and then N. D. Kashirin. Of course, Dybenko (or the investigators who dictated his testimony) also tried to present friendly relations with Semyon Mikhailovich's associates in the First Cavalry Army as part of a broad conspiracy. "In the summer of 1925," one of the cavalry commanders recalled, "there was a drink at Goryachev's apartment on the occasion of Tymoshenko's return from Hungary. Budyonny with his first wife, Timoshenko, Gorbachev, Saken and I were present ... "Already after the start of the Great Patriotic War, in July 1941, the deputy head of the 3rd department of the NPO captain

State Security A. N. Klykov sent Beria a certificate to Budyonny, which stated: "The testimony of a number of arrested participants in the military-fascist conspiracy establishes that Budyonny is a participant and member of the leadership of the anti-Soviet organization of the right in the Red Army, leading, as a member of the leadership, anti-Soviet formations in the cavalry of the Red Army and among

Cossacks. Budyonny back in 1925, after the appointment of K. E. Voroshilov as People's Commissar of the Naval Forces of the USSR, he became close to the then commander of the BVO Egorov A. I., and in subsequent years with Dybenko P. E. (at that time the head of supply of the Red Army ) and together with them led the anti-Soviet organization of the right. Budyonny's right-wing views took shape under the influence of Tomsy, with whom Budyonny kept in touch all the years. In 1931 ... Budyonny was with Rykov and expressed his sympathy for him (after his resignation from the post of chairman of the Council of People's Commissars.

- **B.S. ).** Budyonny spoke a lot to Rykov about the dissatisfaction of the peasants with collectivization and at the end of the conversation said: "Order A.I., and I will support you—in the Don and Kuban, my guys are just

waiting for my order to get on horses. I'm a military man, you know."

Many more of those convicted and executed testified against Budyonny. So, Marshal Yegorov claimed: "It was he, Budyonny, who maintained contact with Kashirin, Apanasenko, Zhloba, who carried out active anti-Soviet work among the Cossacks. They used the creation of special Cossack units to train their counter-revolutionary formations ... They placed their own people, recruited participants in a military conspiracy and anti-Soviet organization of the right, at the head of these units.

From among the participants in the anti-Soviet underground in the cavalry, Budyonny named Kosogov (corps commander), Sheko (division commander), Goryachev (corps commander), Serdich (corps commander) and Fedorenko (assistant cavalry instructor).

Dybenko admitted during interrogation on March 15, 1938 that Budyonny led the anti-Soviet underground in the cavalry.

The investigator who interrogated N. D. Kashirin had an even richer imagination. The

Alexander Ilyich formed a group ... During conversations with me in July 1932, Yegorov called his accomplice and the main support of Budyonny Semyon Mikhailovich ... According to Yegorov's calculations, the anti-Soviet armed uprising would have to be supported by most of the entire cavalry of the Red Army, led by Budyonny himself ... "Based on these testimonies Klykov concluded that Budyonny was intended to be "the leader of the anti-Soviet underground among the Cossacks ... able to lead an anti-Soviet uprising based on anti-Soviet Cossack cadres." The conclusion, of course, is absolutely fantastic. But A.I. Sedyakin, it seems, did not invent when he showed during interrogation on February 10, 1938 that Budyonny, in conversations with him, scolded collectivization and stated at the same time: "I, Budyonny, of course, beat white Cossacks, but I am against in order to ruin them ... Now there is complete collectivization ... In vain they destroyed the Cossack cavalry. I note that the criticism in these words sounds quite moderate and has a rather pragmatic focus: "They killed a good cavalry!" Stalin could even accept such criticism, as he partially agreed with Sholokhov's letters about the "excesses" of collectivization on the Don. Extensive evidence against Budyonny was given by the wife of Marshal Yegorov, G. A. Tseshkovskaya, who was subsequently shot: the presence of celebrities, singers, artists, or salons of the Decembrists. Such salons were arranged at Bubnova, at Grinko, and with us. The pretext for this was a reading of a new play or script, or a small concert by some quartet. The inner side is dirty, not good, the voices are out of tune, going against the general tone of life in the country. For some reason, it always turned out that the regulars of these evenings were people with a cracked soul, with personal grievances about their position, ignored, I would say, embittered by the existing order in the country. So it turned out - women prepared the kitchen, judged, discussed appointments, relocations, slowly scolded the leadership, reflecting the thoughts and aspirations

their husbands ... Bubnova said that Andrei Sergeevich Bubnov was being wiped out, but he was in the top five with Lenin. Tukhachevsky is an aristocrat of blue blood, always cheerful, always in the circle of ladies, he united the military group, walked, without bending, straight to the goal, not hiding his dislike for the leadership. All this public of unrecognized talents was reaching upwards, not sorting out ways and means, everything was put into play - both flattery, and duplicity, and undisguised sycophancy, but their ambitious manners were recognized by someone, they were not allowed in, held back, thrown back, they were indignant, and this anger seeped through here in the salons, among their own.

All this was visible to the naked eye. This is admiration for everything foreign, disbelief in the possibility of doing better in one's own country, they looked for the culprits and found them in the leadership ... Budyonny had a slightly different audience. Companions from the Cavalry Army, veterans of campaigns since the Civil War gathered here: Apanasenko, Kosogov, Tyulenev, Shchadenko, Timoshenko, Gorodovikov, Kulik. Dozens of times I heard retellings of each about personal valor and heroism in the field life. Vanity, a feigned pose, the desire to be seen, jealousy of everything young that overtakes them, were the characteristic features of this company. It was headed by Semyon Mikhailovich Budyonny. He, as in a mirror, reflected in himself all

the shortcomings and virtues of each of them and protected each person from any kind of encroachment. Then Yegorova testified: "At different times I told Lukasevich (Polish ambassador in Moscow. - **B.S.**) about the groupings that existed in the ranks of the army, hostile relations among individuals, talked about the discontent shown by Tukhachevsky, Uborevich, Yakir in relation to Voroshilov, about their desire to take the place of Voroshilov, for which, as each of them believed, he had a reason: more experience, more knowledge. I told Lukasevich that there is a second grouping of Yegorov - Budyonny, which is in opposition to Tukhachevsky.

Probably, rumors about such testimony penetrated the society. From here myths



arrest. There is, for example, a legend that Yezhov gave the order to arrest Budyonny. When the security officers came to his dacha, Semyon Mikhailovich rolled out a machine gun from the hiding place, hoisted it into the attic and began to call Stalin: "Joseph Vissarionovich, enemies in disguise want to capture me! .. I will shoot back to the last, but I won't give up alive!" "Hold on, Semyon, I'm sending help!" And then, at a reception in the Kremlin, Stalin took Budyonny aside: "Semyon, but you still hand over the machine gun!" Of course, this story is pure fantasy. Only Stalin could order the arrest of Budyonny, and he would never back down from his intention. And no one would arrest Budyonny at the dacha. He would simply be summoned to the People's Commissariat of Defense and quietly and calmly taken to the office of an old friend - Voroshilov. But the legend conveys the character of Budyonny well. There is no doubt that the commander of the First Cavalry would not have died alive if they had tried to arrest him. By the way, Yezhov himself, after his arrest, at one of the interrogations in April 1939, named Budyonny, as well as the future Marshal B. M. Shaposhnikov, among the "military conspirators" known to him, allegedly preparing the assassination of Stalin and the coup d'état with him. However, this did not have any consequences for both, they did not think to start either Budyonny or Shaposhnikov. Stalin knew perfectly well the price of such testimony, as well as the fact that Yezhov did not organize any conspiracy. But Nikolai Ivanovich had to be quietly executed in order to blame him in the eyes of the public for the "excesses" of the great purge. But Stalin did not intend to send Semyon

Mikhailovich and Boris Mikhailovich "to Tukhachevsky's headquarters" at all. Stalin appreciated Budyonny not only for his devotion, but also for his ability to play the accordion well. His playing and songs brightened up boring Kremlin gatherings. As the third wife of Marshal Maria Vasilievna recalled, "sometimes a car slowed down near our dacha, a disheveled driver ran in: " Marya Vasilievna! Bring an accordion! Iosif Vissarionovich and Semyon Mikhailovich are going to sing ... "I never heard Stalin sing, but my husband had a wonderful voice.

However, according to the daughter of Marshal Nina Semyonovna Budyonny, her father's relationship with Stalin was not so close: "After Stalin's death, I, sobbing, went up to my dad and asked in tears: "Dad, how are we going to live now? "But he was silent a little and said: "I think it's not bad." I suspect that this was also a legend, born during the years of the thaw, when it became unfashionable to be too close to Stalin. In fact, Budyonny, in all likelihood, sincerely mourned the death of Stalin, who personally did him only good, never punished or disgraced him. During the funeral, Budyonny, along with other marshals, carried the Order of the Generalissimo, but this, however, was a protocol duty. By itself, this fact is nothing about the feelings and experiences of Semyon Mikhailovich

cannot say.

In December 1937, Budyonny was elected a deputy of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR of the first convocation, and at the very first session he became a member of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet. In March 1938, he became a member of the Main Military Council, chaired by

Voroshilov. The cult of Budyonny continued to exist at the end of the 1930s, but was already inferior not only to the cult of Stalin, but also to the cult of Voroshilov. In 1938, a song appeared about the Luhansk locksmith Klim (music by the Pokrass brothers, lyrics by Viktor Gusev):

Across the river, beyond the  
Lugansk Soldiers walked in a row,  
The Voroshilov detachment  
made its way early in the  
morning. Clouds flew across  
the sky, Willows bowed to the  
winds, Silently mothers looked  
After their departed sons!

CHORUS:

Listen to the battle song, Look  
into the night through the darkness and  
smoke. Take care of your native  
country, Like a Lugansk locksmith Klim!

Oakbinding will not forget, As  
through the groves, along the  
bottoms, the Germans in helmets fled

From the Luhansk partisans!  
Where in a mighty column  
Under the shrapnel whistle and ringing  
Voroshilov and Budyonny Led  
the army across the Don!

From Arkhangelsk to the Crimea,  
From the Urals to the  
Altai Klima's fighting glory  
Swept from region to region. If a  
harsh battle breaks out, The  
insidious enemy will attack, - Then  
we will go to new victories.

The first marshal will lead.

It is characteristic that Budyonny was still mentioned next to Voroshilov. This testified that the Voroshilov cult was not supposed to replace the Budennovsky cult at all, but to coexist peacefully with it. But, unlike songs about Semyon Mikhailovich, songs about Kliment Efremovich never came from the Red Army masses, but were created only by order from above. Although about Budyonny by the end of the 30s, songs were also written by order. In the same 1938, another song about him was born, simply called "Marshal Budyonny" (music by Vano Muradeli, lyrics by Alexander Gatov). However, the "first red officer" also appeared here:

In the village of Batayskaya, in the silence of the  
steppe, Where the distance is wide and the  
eagles in the sky, He grew fearless for his native  
people. Our marshal and friend, a legendary hero.

Budyonny is like a song in all languages About  
our victories, about glorious regiments. In  
reconnaissance along with tanks along the shore and wade,  
For the glory of the Red Army, Budennovites, forward! (2 times)

Everywhere Budyonny smashed the belyaks,  
he defended the Soviet power from wolves. On  
horseback, fighters! And in the fires of war, Denikin  
is defeated and the pans are defeated.

Budyonny's glory flies across the country,  
Enemies under the hooves, we are on  
horseback. In reconnaissance with tanks in the sand and through the ice,

For the glory of the Red Army, Budennovites, forward! (2  
times)

Lead, Voroshilov, dear People's Commissar,  
Budyonny is with you and victory is with you,  
And in new battles from hot hooves  
Enemies will tremble and the earth will tremble.

Through storms and thunderstorms, Budyonny  
passed, He is Stalin's most powerful eagle, In  
reconnaissance, along with tanks and in the sky, a plane,  
For the glory of the Red Army, Budennovites, forward! (2  
times)

From the point of view of poetry, the text may be nothing. Although the village of Batayskaya is inserted here, obviously, only in order to preserve the poetic size. After all, our hero was born and grew up in the vicinity of the village of Platovskaya. But from the point of view of tactics, what is sung in this song is complete nonsense. Why, one wonders, should the cavalry go on reconnaissance along with the tanks? And why let the tanks through the ice? If the terrain is passable, then it is more reasonable to let motorcyclists with tanks. If only a rider can pass, then, of course, there can be no talk of tanks. Yes, and from the point of view of history, obvious varnishing is noticeable. As is known, Budyonny were not defeated by the Panzers, and in the end, the Cavalry ingloriously fled from them near Zamosc. Semyon Mikhailovich tells in his memoirs how, when discussing in the People's Commissariat of Defense the question of what the new T-34 tank should have, he honestly admitted: "I know little about tanks. Here the word is for the experts. He generally had a difficult relationship with tanks. In his memoirs, describing the maneuvers of 1940, Budyonny simply told how, seeing that the shells of the attacking tanks were bursting far from the target, he himself got into the lead tank and personally led the attack. The tank nearly fell into a ravine, but was the first to reach the "enemy" artillery positions. When he drove up to the observation post in a tank, Timoshenko angrily snapped: "Who gave you permission to participate in the attack?" - "The commander ran away, and we are looking for him here," Shaposhnikov grinned. Meretskov stood up for Budyonny: "The tankers, having learned that the marshal was in the lead vehicle, significantly increased the pace of the attack." Nevertheless, during the analysis of the e

I advise you, Semyon Mikhailovich, not to get into a tank, but to be at the command post and lead the troops. It was during the Civil War with a saber unsheathed that we rushed after you to attack. But those days are long gone and a tank is not a horse.”

After the inglorious Soviet-Finnish war, Voroshilov was removed from the post of People's Commissar of Defense, but remained a member of the Politburo. On May 7, 1940, the former head of the division in the First Cavalry Semyon Konstantinovich Timoshenko became the new people's commissar.

But, unlike Voroshilov, Stalin did not have complete confidence in Timoshenko. Therefore, in August 1940, Joseph Vissarionovich promoted Budyonny to the first deputy people's commissar of defense. Just then, the former subordinate and protege of Timoshenko, K. A. Meretskov, was appointed chief of the General Staff. According to the formal hierarchy, Semyon Mikhailovich became the second person in the people's commissariat after Tymoshenko, pushing Meretskov to third place. It was not very convenient for Semyon Konstantinovich to command his former army commander. In fact, Budyonny did not depend on Timoshenko and could report personally to Stalin on everything that was happening in the military department, bypassing the people's commissar. As first deputy people's commissar of defense, Budyonny was primarily responsible for the logistics of the troops. In December 1940, speaking at a meeting of senior staff, he noted that the rear of the German army during operations in the West acted like a good chronometer. The state of the rear of the Soviet troops did not inspire optimism in him: “We talk a lot about the rear, but now we need to do it. First of all, we need people who are operationally literate and who know the operational rear very well, so that they can take a course on organizing the corresponding rear at the Academy of the General Staff. And now people do not know how to organize the rear. In Belarus (during the Soviet invasion of Poland in September 1939. - **B.S.**)

I had to carry fuel for the 5th mechanized corps by air. It's good that there was no one to fight with. On the roads from Novogrudok to Volkovysk, 75 percent of the tanks stopped due to fuel. The commander said that he could send fuel only by plane, but who will organize it? The organization of the rear requires knowledgeable people. By the way, he was responsible for organizing the rear in

First of all, Semyon Mikhailovich himself, but, as usual, he did not suffer any punishment for the identified shortcomings. In that remarkable speech, Budyonny dwelled in detail on the role and interaction of individual branches of the armed forces. In particular, he said: "After the First Imperialist War, we were living witnesses to the fact that, in addition to railway transport, the development of highways and dirt roads took place. The army was sharply divided in its structure into two parts. One part is inactive and the other is mobile. Along with rail transport, road transport appeared, which can transport divisions, corps, and even armies. Airborne assault forces and air transport appeared ... And when I say that the army was sharply divided into sedentary and mobile branches of the armed forces, I mean, among the latter, motorized infantry, tanks, aviation and motorcycle units ... What kind of debate took place in terms of the use of mobile military branches as in tactics and in the operational art of these new and already massed branches of the armed forces - tanks, aviation and motorized infantry? I remember, and you know this very well, that we have interpreted these issues in different ways. This interpretation and reasoning has always rested on one-sidedness. We talked abstractly. In particular, when it came to the cavalry, they said that, they say, the cavalry has now outlived its time, and it is no longer needed in modern warfare. This issue was debated for one or two years, and then it was decided that after all, aviation is not the enemy of the cavalry, it can support it and that they can act together. Then tankettes appeared. Here the opinion appears that wedges are the enemy of cavalry, they will definitely destroy it. Fuller's theory (an English military theorist, a supporter of the creation of professional mechanized armies, small in number, but saturated with tanks and aircraft. - **B.S.**) wedged into the brains of some people in our army, and then

refused this as well.

The operational idea of using tanks nestled in the army at one time in such a way that tanks could operate on an operational scale, without any support from cavalry, motorized infantry, and infantry in general. Then they came back to another

the conclusion that tanks cannot operate on their own. They said that they could solve problems only on the battlefield, at the forefront of the enemy's defense. And then came Hasan. We suffered unnecessary losses in tanks there, and therefore some concluded that the tanks had now outlived their lives. Tanks, of course, cannot operate successfully in the mountains. In the Finnish theater, too, not knowing the conditions of the theater, tanks were used unsuccessfully. After this experience, voices are again heard that the tanks did not live up to expectations. It would be wrong to take such an indiscriminate approach to assessing the types of troops and their use ... Turning to today's issues, it seems to me that we should now not argue, but do. We have cavalry, we have motorized infantry, we have tanks, we have mechanized corps, we also have aviation. Now we need to teach people to work in cooperation. In addition, even if there is a single chief on earth, then it is necessary to communicate with the air. Therefore, under a single chief there should be an aviation chief. Finally, we need a headquarters that unites the work. We must unite all mobile branches of the armed forces: aviation, cavalry, tanks, motorized units. They must not be thrown in order to plug holes, as they used to plug with mobile arms. Tov. Pavlov (Commander of the Western Special Military District

D. G. Pavlov made a report on the use of mechanized troops in an offensive operation and on the introduction of a mechanized corps into the breakthrough. - B. S.) correctly raises the question of preparing for the introduction of the success development echelon into the breakthrough. Breakthrough is not an easy question. It seems to me that the commander of a cavalry corps, the commander of a mechanized corps, the commander of a motorized corps or division must necessarily understand each other. It comes from training. Kart training, field training and drill training. It is necessary to ensure that they understand each other at a distance of one words".

It is easy to see that Budyonny, using the example of how views on the use and significance of tanks changed dramatically, tried to defend the thesis about the important role in the future big war of cavalry, which will closely interact with tanks and

aviation. In fact, he voiced the idea of creating cavalry mechanized groups, actually created after Budyonny was appointed commander of the cavalry in 1943. Such groups included tank, mechanized and cavalry corps. In fact, in this case, the cavalrymen only slowed down the movement of the mechanized units in those areas where there were good roads and there were no significant enemy troops, so that the mechanized and tank troops could use their advantage in speed. In those areas where there were no roads, for example, in the mountains, on the contrary, tank and mechanized units became a burden for cavalrymen. In the event that it was necessary to attack the enemy, who managed to take up defensive positions, the cavalrymen were a good target for enemy artillery and machine guns, and when moving in columns across open areas, they were also for aviation, since the cavalry had absolutely insufficient anti-aircraft weapons. The Germans, whose tankers usually interacted with motorized units, generally preferred to deliver infantry to the line of attack on armored personnel carriers and never threw cavalry and tanks into joint attacks on a fortified enemy. In the Red Army, there were no armored personnel carriers at all, and the level of losses from enemy fire when infantrymen advanced to the line of attack was considered quite acceptable. Budyonny's thoughts about the need to organize the interaction of commanders of various types of troops in peacetime, to teach them this both on the maps and in the field were absolutely correct. True, like most of the participants in the meeting, Budyonny's report was probably written by referents with an academic education (Zhukov, for example, his report on the nature of the modern offensive operation was written by Colonel I. Kh. Bagramyan and Lieutenant Colonel G. V. Ivanov). But, in any case, Semyon Mikhailovich approved their point of view. As for the example he cited with the low rate of advance of Soviet tank formations in Belarus due to a lack of fuel, this was caused by the poor organization of command and control of tank units, including due to a lack of radio equipment and



for the equally poor organization of their supply. These vices were characteristic of the Soviet armored forces throughout the Great Patriotic War. In general, the

Soviet divisions were much worse than the German ones provided with vehicles and means of communication, especially in the first years of the war. For example, in 1941, a Soviet infantry division had 558 vehicles, 99 tractors, and no motorcycles at all, while a German infantry division had 902 vehicles, 62 tractors, and 527 motorcycles. Radio stations were especially lacking in Soviet tank units, where they were installed only on the tanks of unit commanders.

Budyonny and Marshal G.I. Kulik (former chief of artillery of the First Cavalry) were not so wrong when they advocated the preservation of a significant part of the horse-drawn artillery until suitable vehicles and tractors appeared in the required quantity, suitable dear to them. The problem was finally solved only with the appearance in Russia of American "Studebakers", which, of course, no one was going to supply to the Soviet Union before the start of the war. And the Germans in the fall of 1941, having lost a fifth of their fleet on Russian off-road, were forced to increasingly replace cars with horses.

Budyonny and Kulik

also advocated more numerous divisions of the Red Army, 18-20 thousand each, which would help reduce the shortage of radio stations. However, in reality, the development of the Red Army took a different path - along the path of a constant increase in the number of divisions and corps with a significant reduction in the number of their personnel, which only reduced the degree of their manageability. True, in 1943, when Lend-Lease deliveries increased, the shortage of communications equipment in the

Red Army also decreased. The formation of 29 mechanized corps, begun on the orders of Stalin on the eve of the Great Patriotic War, each of which was supposed to have more than a thousand tanks according to the state - twice as many as in the previously existing tank corps - only worsened the position of the Red Army. After

the new corps did not become larger, therefore, it was even less manageable than the previous tank one. By the end of the 30s, the name of Budyonny gradually disappeared from new songs, being replaced by the name of Voroshilov, and then Timoshenko, who in 1940 became People's Commissar of Defense. For example, in the famous pre-war song "If there is war tomorrow" there were such lines:

We do not want war, but we will defend ourselves,  
- We strengthen our defense not in vain,  
- And on enemy soil we will defeat the enemy  
With little blood, with a mighty blow!

In the whole world nowhere is there such a  
force To crush our country, Stalin is with  
us dear, and with an iron hand Voroshilov leads us  
to victory!

And when Tymoshenko was appointed People's Commissar of Defense, they began to sing:

Dear Stalin is with us, Timoshenko is a hero,  
Voroshilov is leading us to victory!

There was no place for Budyonny in this song. Surely Semyon Mikhailovich had a hard time in his heart about this belittling of his own glory, but he did not show it. But in the 1940 song "Combat Horse" (composer D. Vasiliev-Buglai, poet V. Lebedev-Kumach), specially dedicated to the First Horse and appeared in connection with the annexation of eastern Polish lands, Budyonny still found a place. Here it was impossible without a commander:

Let's sing, friends, about the First Cavalry,  
So that the song is a success. So  
that in all regiments and squadrons It  
rushed like a light bird.

CHORUS:

Be glorified by the strength of the  
valiant, Hardened in  
battles, Pride of the Soviet  
Motherland Combat equestrian!

Hot summer and cold winter Under the  
cruel enemy lead Gathered your ranks  
Budyonny, Voroshilov was your father.

Comrade Stalin has Octoberized you.  
And he said to the fighters in Stalin's  
style: "So that people become stronger,  
So that the horse, like lightning, flies!"

And the Stalinist word came true, As  
it always comes true, - The cavalry  
smashed anyone, Didn't let them  
hide anywhere.

Count the beaten, slain All enemies for  
twenty glorious years - One hundred names of  
barons and bandits, One hundred  
wagons of magnificent epaulettes!

We will be reminded of the walls of  
Stalingrad About the heroic motherland  
of sons; Dubno and Otrada will tell us,  
How whites and gentlemen were cut down.

Glory to the fallen horsemen-heroes,  
Honor and glory to the valiant living ones!  
Their names will be before the fight  
Inflame us with the fervor of battle.

But in terms of popularity, and also in terms of aesthetic qualities,  
“Combat Horse” was an order of magnitude inferior to the song “If there  
is war tomorrow”. One verb "October" (meaning "baptized") what is  
worth! But all the same, Semyon Mikhailovich had something to  
replenish his drinking repertoire.

## **Chapter Nine**

### **THE GREAT PATRIOTIC**

The beginning of the war found Budyonny in the office of the people's  
commissar of defense. At 03:30 on June 22, 1941, a message  
arrived about a German air raid on the cities of Belarus. On June 23,  
the Headquarters of the High Command was created, which included,  
among others, Marshal Budyonny. On June 25, he led the army group  
of the Stavka reserve with the task of delaying the advance of the enemy by

at the turn of Sushchevo - the Dnieper River, and at the slightest opportunity to counterattack. But such a possibility was not even out of the question - the front was bursting at the seams, and on July 1, in the conditions of a sharp complication of the situation, the army group was reassigned to Marshal Timoshenko. S. M.

Budyonny

and A. I. Eremenko became his deputies. But Semyon Mikhailovich did not last long as a deputy to his former subordinate. Already on July 10, he was appointed commander-in-chief of the troops of the South-Western strategic direction - the South-Western and Southern fronts that were part of it defended Ukraine. On the eve of Budyonny arrived in Moscow. Stalin affectionately admonished Semyon Mikhailovich, who was setting off for the capital of Soviet Ukraine: "You answer with your head for Kyiv, so think about how to contain the enemy. I don't have any reserves yet, and no matter how hard it is, don't ask, it's a waste of time."

Semyon Mikhailovich arrived in Kyiv on the evening of the same July 10th. The circumstances of this appointment are clarified by a somewhat unusual, but quite reliable source. On June 28, 1953, L.P. Beria wrote to Voroshilov from prison: "At the beginning of the war, Comrade Stalin strongly scolded me and called me a political coward when I proposed to appoint, in the difficult times experienced by our Motherland, known to the whole country, you and Budyonny front commanders. He scolded him, and a little later Comrade Stalin carried out the appointment. The artistic embodiment of this idea was the song that appeared in the first days of the war, but then quickly forgotten, because the Red Army had to be led into battle by completely different marshals. This song was called "Three Marshals", and all the same brothers Pokrass

Mighty columns are moving  
menacingly, And Voroshilov,  
Timoshenko and Budyonny are leading  
them to heroic deeds - Three proven, glorified eagles.

CHORUS:

The call is heard: -  
To victory - forward!  
in their commanders

The people are  
sure. Lead, Voroshilov!  
Lead, Timoshenko!  
Lead us, Budyonny, On a  
victorious campaign!

Our marshals are loved by all the people, All their  
thoughts are at one with the people, And it is  
not for nothing that so many battle songs  
are dedicated to their victories and campaigns.

Like a hero they went to the enemy And  
they know how to fight like a Stalinist,  
They led us into battles with glory  
And taught us how to win a victory.

And today we follow them boldly, To defeat  
the enemies in a decisive battle. For freedom, for our  
holy cause, For our beloved homeland!

And here is another song that appeared in the first weeks of the war,  
when Tymoshenko was still People's Commissar of Defense (on  
July 19, Stalin replaced him in this post, who also became Supreme  
Commander on August 8). It was created by the composer I.  
Dunaevsky and the poet I. Dobrovolsky:

Sing a ringing song, Sing a song  
more cheerfully. For his dear  
side, About his mighty strength.

We will crush with a harsh hand,  
We will defeat the Nazis all in battle. At the  
call of our dear Stalin, we go into  
battle for our Motherland.

You lead with myriad strength,  
You lead the troops into a victorious  
battle, Our people's falcon is bright-winged,  
Voroshilov is a marshal.

You strike with mighty lava, You  
strike with a thunderstorm over the  
enemy, You cover our homeland with glory,  
Tymoshenko is Stalin's people's commissar.

Battle hardened, Battle  
mighty wall

On the Nazis, our Marshal Budyonny, Move the  
regiments into the last formidable battle!

And here is another one, quite folklore in form - "Budyonny's  
meeting with the Cossacks" (music by V. Solovyov-Sedoy, lyrics  
by A. Churkin):

Comrade Budyonny was driving  
on the native side. I  
met in the green valley the Don  
Horse Regiment. "Hey,  
great, Cossacks, daring  
grunts!" - "Hello, comrade  
Budyonny, Our steppe eagle!"

"How, Cossacks, are we doing,  
How, friends, are we  
living? Do we sing songs merrily,  
How do we beat enemies?  
The Cossacks answer,  
Remote grunts:  
"We are hefty with you, father, We  
give them Heat!

So that they don't show  
their eyes In our native  
land, So that in what they dived  
In the Neman al into the  
Danube. Let's avenge the  
collective farms, For  
burning tears, - In our  
Cossack hands Just give the Saber!

Only we will put an end to the war, We  
will protect our land, In  
our village, Budyonny, Come visit  
us. The Don people  
have plenty of bread  
and honey, In the huts there  
are banduras Songs, know, sing!

"Well, thank you, Cossacks, All  
the people of the Don,  
Let's strike like a storm, attack  
Everything behind me, forward!

Bravely we will fight

For native villages, The  
enemy under the horse and under  
the peak Will find Death in battle!

In fact, unfortunately, it was not the Cossacks with Budyonny who gave the Germans heat, but quite the opposite, the Germans drove the defeated Soviet armies to Rostov. And many Cossacks generally went over to the side of the enemy, remembering the insults inflicted on them by the Soviets, and preferred to serve in the Wehrmacht, and not in the Red Army. For example, a certain Semyon Larin wrote in November 1942 to his father in the village of Yegorlykская: "... I have the right to be proud that I am a soldier in the German army, I am listed as a Don Cossack. On mobilization, he did not fight, he immediately went to the side of the German army. In general, I didn't fight with the Reds for a single minute, but went to the German army. And the Cossacks

were going to avenge the collective farms not to the Germans, but to the Bolsheviks ... By the time Budyonny arrived in Poltava, at the headquarters of the South-Western direction, the troops of the South-Western and Southern fronts had already lost border battles and lost almost all tanks. The Germans were marching on Kyiv, and Budyonny had orders to keep the capital of Soviet Ukraine at all costs. Here is how Semyon Mikhailovich's arrival in Kiev, at the headquarters of the Southwestern Front, is described by Nikita Sergeevich Khrushchev, at that time the head of the Communists of Ukraine and a member of the Military Council of the front: "Budyonny came to us during stubborn battles for Kiev. I asked: "What is being done on other fronts? I don't know anything, we don't get any information. You, Semyon Mikhailovich, are from Moscow. Do you know?" "Yes," he says, "I know and I will tell you." And he, one on one, told me that the Western Front literally collapsed under the very first shots and was dismembered. They failed to organize a proper rebuff to the enemy. The enemy took advantage of our rota and destroyed the aviation of the front at the airfields, and also inflicted heavy damage on our ground forces already on June 22, at the first blow. The front has collapsed. Stalin sent Kulik there to help recruit. But so far there is no information from Marshal Kulik. What happened to him is unknown. I expressed regret: "It's a pity that Kulik died." Budyonny said: "Don't

it was said in such a tone that made it clear that Kulik was considered a traitor in Moscow; that he, apparently, was transferred to the enemy. I knew Kulik, considered him an honest man, and therefore said that I felt sorry for him. "Well, don't pity him, don't pity him," Budyonny repeated. I realized that, apparently, he had some conversation about this with Stalin. Why Budyonny came is hard to say. Stayed with us for a short time. And in the evening he asked: "Where will we rest? Let's go to bed together." I agreed. "And where? You? Where do you rest? I say: "This is where I rest." They left the house. Outside, a tent was pitched and hay was thrown in. "Here, in the tent, I sleep." - "Yes, what are you?" I explained to him: here, where our headquarters is, there is a swamp, you can't dig cracks, water will appear. That's why I'm escaping during an air raid in a tent. Budyonny: "Well, okay. Since you are here, I am also with you." And we lay down, slept for a few hours, rested. Early in the morning we were awakened by German aircraft. Low-level aircraft flew over the village and bombed it. Our anti-aircraft guns fired. There was no visible hit on aircraft in sight. And our planes did not appear. I got angry and indignant at this. I turn to Astakhov: "Well, what is it? Why do they fly and bomb with impunity, and we cannot do anything?" The Germans had already bombed and left. Astakhov reports: "So many planes were shot down." I asked: "Where are the shot down? I didn't see them fall." - "And they fell beyond the Dnieper." - "Well, if they fell beyond the Dnieper, then we can report that even more of them were shot down." I think that Astakhov took sin upon his soul. Maybe they shot down something, but I was very discouraged by his statement, and I said: "The soldiers see how the Germans fly with impunity, but we do not inflict damage on the enemy." Budyonny soon left us. He did not go to the troops, he returned to Moscow. With what tasks he came (otherwise it could not be - this is not an excursion), I did not know, he did not tell me this. We just talked to him, he listened to the situation, listened to the commander of the troops and the head of the operations department of the headquarters Bagramyan. His conversation with Baghramyán made a deep impression on me. I remember it well and still can't forg



who reported on the situation. Bagramyan is a very clear-cut person, he reported everything as it is, about all the troops that we had then: their location, situation. Here Budyonny settled on Bagramyan. Why, I don't know exactly. I did not attach much importance to this conversation then. In military language, this means: to understand the situation. The head of the operational department of the headquarters reported the situation to the Marshal of the

Soviet Union, sent from Moscow. I only remember that the analysis of the situation ended with these words: "What is it with you? You don't know your troops." "I don't know, I told you, Comrade Marshal," Bagramyan replies. "So I listen to you, look at you and think that you should be shot. To shoot for such a thing," Semyon Mikhailovich says in a sort of squeaky voice. Bagramyan: "Why, Semyon Mikhailovich, shoot me? If I am not fit to be the chief of operations, you give me a division. I am a colonel, I can command a division. And what is the use of being shot?" Budyonny rudely persuaded Bagramyan to agree to be shot. Well, of course, Bagramyan could not agree. I was even surprised why Semyon Mikhailovich so stubbornly sought Bagramyan's "consent". Of course, it must be taken into account that such a "kind" conversation took place between the Marshal of the Soviet Union and the colonel after a very plentiful dinner with cognac. And yet, despite this circumstance, the form of conversation was unacceptable. It was conducted by a representative of the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command and, of course, did not correspond in any way to the tasks that were then set, and could not help the cause and our troops. This also indicates the state of the people.

Semyon Mikhailovich then completely went beyond what was permitted. But then we just looked at this conversation frivolously. Although it concerned the life of a person, however, it did without consequences. Semyon Mikhailovich left, and we remained in the same difficult situation, which after his arrival did not improve or worsen. I think Khrushchev's memory failed him a little. Since Budyonny arrived at the height of the battles for Kyiv, it means that we are talking about his trip on July 10, already

Probably, the following memoirs of Nikita Sergeevich also refer to this time, immediately after Budyonny's departure from Kiev, although Khrushchev, due to an aberration of memory that is quite excusable after three decades, dates a new meeting with Budyonny to the end of

July. By the way, I note that on that visit to Kyiv, Budyonny allocated two rifle corps from the reserves to the Southwestern Front, one of which had just arrived from the North Caucasus. This helped to delay the advance of the enemy.

Khrushchev recalled: "Once, at the end of July or at the beginning of August 1941, Stalin called me from Moscow to Kyiv and said that the headquarters of the South-Western direction had been created. Budyonny was appointed commander of the troops of the South-Western direction. Budyonny will sit near Poltava with his small operational headquarters for managing and coordinating the actions of two fronts: the South-Western, whose troops were commanded by Kirponos, and I was a member of the Military Council there, and the Southern Front, whose

troops were commanded at that time, it seems, by Tyulenev ... So, Stalin told me: "Budyonny is alone in Poltava, and we think that you should go to him. We will approve you as a member of the Military Council of the High Command of the South-Western Direction, and you and Budyonny will command two fronts: the South-Western and Southern. I answer: "If I need to go to the South-Western direction, to the headquarters of Budyonny, then Comrade Burmistenko, the second secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine, can be appointed instead of me. A very good comrade, an intelligent person, and he will quite cope with his duties. He knows people and they know him. His attitude is very good. Leave Kirponos in command."

"Good," he says. - Then you call Burmistenko and say that he is being approved as a member of the Military Council of the Southwestern Front. And you immediately take off and go to Budyonny.

You will be in command there together with Budyonny." When I drove up to Budyonny's headquarters, I was surprised by the tank standing at the po

"Now it's not like in Civil. The Germans have equipment, planes, so I hide from them in a tank, I ride it instead cars."

I assumed the duties of a member of the Military Council of the South-Western Direction. What kind of headquarters was this, what kind of organization - the headquarters of the direction? What exactly she did, I still can't say. The command of the direction did not deal with any issues of support, ammunition, material supply, combat support. The headquarters of the fronts themselves dealt with these issues, they had a direct connection with the Headquarters, and they decided everything with the Headquarters, bypassing us. The command of the direction interacted with the fronts only in matters of an operational nature. The situation was reported to us, the commanders reported to us, but they reported as if on an equal footing: we could give them advice, this or that. The commanders accepted these advices and instructions from us, and if they liked them, they carried them out. And if they did not like it, then through their own channels (and they had as many such channels as they liked) they appealed to the General Staff. I have a very good relationship with Budyonny. His character, on the one hand, is positive, and on the other, very cocky. Once we were returning late in the evening from Dnepropetrovsk. The situation was difficult: our troops left Dnepropetrovsk. The sentry guarding the entrances to our headquarters detained us. Budyonny began talking to him and insulting him. The soldier began to answer him according to the charter. Here Budyonny began to "explain" to him more insistently, and this explanation ended with him hitting the soldier in the face. I was just amazed. How so? The Marshal of the Soviet Union struck a man who was completely innocent, who acted in accordance with the charter, struck in violation of all charter norms. We were driving there, and he delayed us, it was his duty, after all, he was appointed for this. Pure arbitrariness! I attribute this incident to the marshal's irascibility. Because, in principle, Budyonny is not like that, but he apparently retained his old habit as a senior non-commissioned officer, which he was in the tsarist army. This is where the lack

Mihailoviĭ about this, and I felt that he himself experienced what had happened. Unfortunately, Budyonny allowed himself such antics more than once ...

"Probably, Stalin's call followed immediately after Budyonny's departure from Kyiv. As a result, Khrushchev, fortunately for him, had to go to Poltava. But if Nikita Sergeevich had stayed in Kyiv, he could well have shared the sad fate of the command of the Southwestern Front, who died in September when leaving the encirclement. True, I think that in this case, a special plane would have been sent for Khrushchev at the last moment. But for his comrade Mikhail Alekseevich Burmistenko, second secretary of the Communist Party of Ukraine and a member of the Military Council of the Southwestern Front, the plane never arrived, and he died in battle. Regarding the assault of Soviet military leaders, Khrushchev wrote in some detail: "Of course, Stalin never showed deep trust to anyone. He always had some internal suspicion of any person. He once told me in the heat of revelation: "I am a lost man, I don't trust anyone. I don't trust myself." This he told me in 1952, in Sukhumi, in the presence of Mikoyan. Here is a characteristic feature of Stalin. I don't know what came over him then, if he suddenly got the courage and frankly gave himself a characterization. And in 1942 I told him: "Comrade Stalin, I can only name candidates from among those people who commanded troops in our direction. I don't know others. Therefore, you must name the commander of the Stalingrad Front. You know more people, you have a wider horizon." - "Yes you? What do you? I already told you about Eremenko. Commander Vlasov would be very good there, but I can't give Vlasov now, he is surrounded by troops. If it were possible to recall him from there, I would approve Vlasov. But Vlasov is not. You name whoever you want!" I was strong, I was strong, but I was placed in such conditions that I could not leave the premises until I called the commander of the troops of the Stalingrad Front. I say: "Of the people of our front, I would name Gordov, even with all his shortcomings (his shortcoming was rudeness. He fought with people). Himself, - I continue, - very frail

little man, but beats his officers. However, he understands military affairs. That's why I would call it." At that time he commanded the 21st Army and was at our disposal. I already knew him better from the sector of the front which he occupied on the Donets. Serdyuk was a member of the Military Council. Serdyuk gave me a reference to Gordov - both good and bad. Good - in the sense of knowledge of the matter, his energy and courage; bad - about his rudeness up to beating people. This, however, at that time was considered to some extent a positive feature of the commander. Stalin himself, when any commander reported to him about something, often said: "Did you beat him in the face? To fill his muzzle, muzzle! In a word, to fill the face of a subordinate was then considered heroism. And they beat! Later I found out that once Eremenko even hit a member of the Military Council. I told him later: "Andrei Ivanovich, how did you allow yourself to be hit? You are the general, the commander. And you hit a member of the War Council?!" "You know," he answers, "there was such a situation." "Whatever the situation, there are other means to communicate with a member of the Military Council than to fight with fists." He again explained that the situation was difficult. It was necessary to urgently send shells, he came on this issue, and a member of the Military Council sits and plays chess. I tell him, "Well, I don't know. If he played chess at such a difficult time, this, of course, is not good, but hitting him is not an ornament for a commander, and indeed for a person in general. Then this member of the Military Council became the secretary of the Astrakhan regional party committee, after the death of Stalin. He was a decent man who deserved respect. Gave in the face and Budyonny. I have already told how he hit the soldier. Beat subordinates and Georgy Zakharov. Then he became deputy commander of the troops of the Stalingrad Front. I appreciated and respected him as a man who understands military affairs. He is a warrior devoted to the Soviet state and the Communist Party, but he is not very restrained at hand

handshake to yourself. I only knew about such facts of his life in the past.

In the meantime, in a word, I called Stalin Gordov. Stalin says:

"All right, let's approve Gordov." Right there, as usual, sat Molotov.

Stalin and tells him: "Take a notebook, a pencil and write an order on the appointment of Gordov." Soon Gordov took up the

duties of commander of the troops of the front. It is worth emphasizing here that Budyonny was the only one of the Soviet marshals who beat ordinary Red Army soldiers in the face.

Zhukov, Eremenko, Konev (according to the testimony of Marshal A.E. Golovanov, due to poor health, he no longer relied on a fist, but on a stick) and others did not stoop to the Red

Army. They simply shot captains and majors, and they did not clean the face of less than a colonel. Here the peculiar

nationality of Semyon Mikhailovich manifested itself, as well as the memory of those times when he still served in the tsarist army

as a simple non-commissioned officer. According to Khrushchev,

he threatened generals and senior officers with execution. However,

no data has yet been made public that during the Great Patriotic War, someone was really shot on the orders of Budyonny - after all, he was quick-

witted ... Budyonny was removed from the South-West direction

because he, seeing the threat of encirclement, together with

Kirponos in August - September 1941, he insisted on

an immediate withdrawal from Kiev and the Dnieper arc to the

border of the Psyol River. It was the right suggestion. At that

moment, the Southwestern Front did not have combat-ready

tank units to fend off the advance of the Kleist tank group from

the Kremenchug bridgehead. Semyon Mikhailovich also

reported to Headquarters with displeasure that the Bryansk

Front of A. I. Eremenko, which was supposed to defeat

Guderian's tank group, which threatened to close the

encirclement ring around Kiev from the north, was clearly not

coping with its task. But Stalin forbade the withdrawal. Iosif

Vissarionovich was strongly influenced by the position of the

Chief of the General Staff, Marshal B. M. Shaposhnikov, who

hoped to keep Kyiv. The result was a disaster. The main forces of the Southwest

Khrushchev recalls how this happened: "Budyonny and I went to see Malinovsky. Instead of the 6th Army, which died surrounded by the former, a new one was created, and it was assigned the same number. Malinovsky was appointed commander of this army. Before Malinovsky was unknown to me. Previously, he commanded a corps. The army headquarters was located, in my opinion, in the school of the city of Novomoskovsk. We arrived. The situation was very difficult, the enemy kept the road under bombardment all the time so that we could not bring in reinforcements. But we had nothing to throw. Budyonny and I entered the school and saw the following picture: everything around was buzzing, thundering; The situation was reported by the commander of the 6th Army, Malinovsky, and at the same time, Tyulenev, commander of the troops of the Southern Front, was brought on a stretcher. His wound was not serious, but he could not walk, as he was wounded in the leg (the pulp was damaged). To inspire the fighters, Tyulenev himself went into their ranks, led them to attack the enemy, and was wounded when a mine exploded.

With him came the secretary of the regional committee of the party, Zadionchenko. After Tyulenev was wounded, a Cossack, who had previously commanded a tank corps, by the name of Ryabyshev, was appointed commander of the troops of the Southern Front.

Everything in our power was done to push the enemy back and not allow him to create a strong foothold on the left bank of the Dnieper. But our efforts were not crowned with success. We did not have real forces, real opportunities. At the same time, we discovered that the enemy, concentrating troops, was trying to force the Dnieper north of Dnepropetrovsk, in the Kremenchug region. Again, everything in our power was taken: we sent aviation there, bombed enemy tank troops and infantry on the approaches to the river, so as not to allow him to force the Dnieper. But the enemy nevertheless crossed the river and created a bridgehead, in addition to the

Dnepropetrovsk region, also in the Kremenchug region and occupied the left-bank part of this city. When we began to figure out what further intentions the enemy had, a fairly clear picture emerged.

His plan seemed to us as follows: a blow from the south, from the bridgehead near K

Kursk, break through our rear (we had no troops there) and close the encirclement of our troops located along the Dnieper at Cherkasy and beyond the Dnieper in Kyiv. We discussed the current situation. There were no additional forces at our disposal. Even having guessed the enemy's plan, we could not paralyze its implementation. We have matured such a decision: to take a certain number of troops, artillery and cover up on the flank in the direction from Kiev to Kremenchug, so that here, in the Ukrainian steppes, there would be something to block the Germans' path to the north and prevent them from closing the ring. What could we take? It was clear that the troops that were in Kyiv were not yet used. A quiet situation was created there, and the enemy did not make any efforts against Kyiv. Budyonny and I prepared an appropriate order and sent the text to Moscow to get consent. They themselves did not have the right to carry out such a regrouping. Moscow reacted very quickly, but in a peculiar way. They did not give us any answer, but instead Marshal Timoshenko suddenly flew in with an order to Budyonny to surrender the main command of the South-Western direction. Tymoshenko took over as Commander-in-Chief of the Southwestern Direction. Budyonny and I said goodbye. Budyonny told me: "This is the result of our initiative," and left. They changed the commander-in-chief, but the situation did not change, since the new commander-in-chief arrived with his bare hands ... Budyonny and I then proposed to regroup: take artillery from the Kiev direction and use it to prevent the main danger on the left flank, in the Kremenchug direction. The northern direction, from where the enemy moved to encircle our troops, lay on the territory beyond our influence, the influence of the South-Western direction. General Eremenko commanded the troops there. The enemy broke through from Gomel to the southeast. And we didn't get permission to regroup. Timoshenko came to hold the positions where our troops were located. Less than a week later, the enemy cut them off. Our assumptions, as history has shown, were correct. I don't



I can now say that if we had carried out this regrouping, the catastrophe would not have happened. No, it probably would have happened too. But, in any case, maybe not so strong, because we would have pulled something out of the Kyiv artillery and strengthened our left flank in the direction of Kremenchug. There would have been heavy battles for the enemy and, perhaps, he would not have had enough troops to complete the operation. Even when he had already surrounded our troops, their groups quite freely penetrated through the front line to and fro. This indicates that the enemy's offensive line was

very thin. On September 11, Budyonny was relieved of his post as Commander-in-Chief of the South-West direction. He was immediately summoned to his office by Stalin, who declared: "It seems to me that you did not do everything that was required. Yes, I agree that Eremenko could not stop Guderian's tank group. But you also had a lot of troops." "We had almost no tanks, Comrade Stalin," objected Semyon Mikhailovich. – I am sure that your decision to appoint Tymoshenko as Commander-in-Chief of the South-West Direction instead of me will not change anything. At the most critical moment, and suddenly a change in commander-in-chief. No, I don't understand it. Of course, your order is the law for me, but what will it give? The fate of Kyiv is decided, the Nazis are about to take it. I reported to the Headquarters and to you personally,

Comrade Stalin, I asked for permission to withdraw troops, but ... "- and Budyonny only waved his hand in annoyance. Stalin, after a pause, suddenly began to justify himself: "The Headquarters was sure that the Bryansk Front would deliver a sensitive blow to the Guderian group. Eremenko assured me that he would do it." On September 12, 1941, Budyonny was appointed commander of the Reserve Front instead of Zhukov, who was sent to Leningrad. For two days, Semyon Mikhailovich toured the troops.

The majority were unfired fighters, especially in the militia divisions. The reserve front was mainly manned by divisions of the Moscow militia rifles.

A few days later, the troops of the Southwestern Front were almost completely destroyed. But Stalin did not blame Budyonny for the catastrophe, apparently tacitly admitting his and Marshal Shaposhnikov's guilt. And three weeks after Budyonny took command of the Reserve Front, an even more serious catastrophe broke out in the Western direction than near Kiev. The directive on the transition to defense in the Western direction was given by the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command very late, only on September 27, 1941, and three days later the 2nd Panzer Group of the Germans launched an offensive against the Bryansk Front, which had previously unsuccessfully tried to defeat it. There was no way to prepare the defense for three days. The position of the Western and Reserve Fronts was no better, which had previously also been on the offensive for one and a half to two months and had not had time to prepare a long-term defense. Back on September 21, 1941, von Bock wrote in his diary: "The Russians continue to press on Guderian's 2nd Panzer Group from the east. The 29th motorized division (Fremerey) in the area near Novgorod-Seversky is opposed by units of eight to nine Russian divisions. Fighting on this sector of the front continued the next day. On September 23, Halder noted "minor enemy attacks" at the front of Army Group Center. According to Russian historians M. Khodarenko and B. Nevzorov, "the formations of the 16th, 19th, 22nd, 24th, 29th and 43rd armies advanced even in the last ten days of September, the group of General Ermakov - the entire second half of it, and the 13th army basically the whole month. This diverted the troops from the organization of defense in depth, did not allow the creation of defensive groupings, and ultimately led to large losses of personnel. Thus, on September 27 alone, Yermakov's group lost 4913 people killed, wounded and missing." The former deputy chief of staff of the Bryansk Front, General L. M. Sandalov, admitted in his memoirs: "The fact that Ermakov's group fought mainly offensive battles in the second half of September and paid little attention to defense issues weakened the front's left-flank troops, and brought huge losses

benefits." The former commander of the Bryansk Front, Marshal A. I. Eremenko, on the contrary, stated in his memoirs: "Summing up the combat activities of the troops of the Bryansk Front for the period from August 14 to September 30, 1941, it should be said that as a result of counterattacks and counterattacks of the troops of the front, especially the counterattack in the area of Trubchevsk, the Nazis suffered significant losses, weakening the power of their shock groups. But he also notes that the troops of the Ermakov group and the 13th Army received an order to go on the defensive only on September 28. Only on September 25, as Halder noted in his diary, was the construction of fortifications by the enemy on the front of Army Group Center was recorded. At the same time, the commander of the Western Front, General I. S. Konev, believed that the Germans would advance along the shortest path - along the Smolensk road. There the main fortifications were erected. The Germans, on the other hand, struck north and south of the road. Perhaps Konev's decision was influenced by the message of the captured German pilot. On September 26, the commander of the Western Front reported to Stalin and Shaposhnikov that, according to the survey of the captured pilot, "the enemy is preparing for an offensive in the direction of Moscow, with the main grouping along the Vyazma-Moscow highway." Contrary to popular belief, the Soviet troops were not much inferior to the enemy in terms of people and equipment. The number of personnel of Army Group Center at the beginning of October was 1,929,406 people, of which about 1.8 million participated in Operation Typhoon. The Germans had 1,387 aircraft and about 1,700 tanks here. They were opposed by the troops of three Soviet fronts, which, according to K. Reinhardt, had 1,252,591 personnel, 849 tanks, 5,637 guns and 4,961 mortars, 62,651 vehicles and tractors, 936 aircraft, including 545 fighters on the front line, about 730 kilometers. Troops of the 22nd, 29th, 30th, 19th, 16th and 20th armies of the Western Front took up defensive positions in the main, Moscow direction in a strip 340 kilometers wide from Lake Seliger to Yelnya. The troops of the 24th and 43rd armies of the Reserve Front defended the line from Yelnya to the Roslavl-Kirov railway in a strip up to 100 kilometers wide, and the 31st,

the rear of the Western Front in a strip 300 kilometers wide along the line Ostashkov - Selizharovo - east of Dorogobuzh. The troops of the Bryansk Front (50th, 3rd, 13th armies, task force Major General Ermakov; commander Colonel General Eremenko) covered the Bryansk-Kaluga and Sevsko-Orlovsko-Tula directions; the front line of their defense in a strip 290 kilometers wide passed along the Snopot-Pochep-Pogar, Glukhov line. Probably, the deployment of four armies on the rear defensive line was a mistake. After breaking through the defenses, they were unable to launch a counterattack or delay the advance of the enemy and were easily defeated by German mobile formations. It would be better to use them to hold the main line of defense.

K. Reinhardt relied on Soviet data, which are clearly underestimated, at least in terms of tanks, since the Germans captured them in the Vyazemsky and Bryansk boilers in 1242, and a certain number of tanks also managed to get out of the encirclement. Perhaps 849 tanks is the number of vehicles combat-ready by early October. Also, the data that there were 486 tanks in the defense zone of the Western Front in parts of the Red Army, the Germans - 591, and guns and mortars - 4028 and 5651, respectively, prove that there were at least 1242 Soviet tanks. Otherwise, it turns out that the Western Front had more than 57% of all tanks available on the three fronts of the Western Direction. In general, the existing balance of forces allowed the Red Army to successfully defend itself, provided that the actions of all the forces defending in the Moscow direction were coordinated and their correct grouping. One kilometer of the defense front accounted for an average of about 1,650 soldiers, 14.2 guns and mortars (including eight guns), 1.65 tanks, and 1.3 aircraft. Taking into account the fact that a significant part of the defense zone was occupied by impenetrable forests and swamps, it was possible to significantly increase the density of troops by concentrating troops in the most dangerous directions - where German tanks could pass. However, since the troops of the three fronts were conducting offensive operations until the last ten

comparison: the Germans in Normandy in June 1944, the density of artillery was less than three guns and less than one tank per kilometer of the front, nevertheless, they managed to hold the front against the landed allies for almost two months. However, there was no coordination of the actions of the three fronts in the Moscow direction, which adversely affected the fate of the Soviet defense.

Theoretically, the actions of the fronts were supposed to be coordinated by the Headquarters and the General Staff, but they had enough worries besides this, including with troops from other directions. It would have been more correct to unite at least two fronts, the Western and the Reserve, into one, the armies of which were still defending in stripes. However, it was not very convenient to subordinate Budyonny to Konev, at that time only a colonel general. At the same time, Stalin clearly did not want to entrust Budyonny with command of all the troops in the Western direction, since he was not sure that Semyon Mikhailovich would cope with such a difficult task.

However, Stalin also did not intend to recall him from command, so as not to offend - especially since, as it turned out, the marshal was absolutely right about the need for an early withdrawal of troops from Kiev. As a result, it was necessary to unite the fronts

and change their commanders after the start of the German offensive, when the encirclement of the bulk of the Soviet troops became a fact. On September 24, 1941, the Chief of the German General Staff, General Franz Halder, while at the headquarters of Army Group Center in Smolensk, together with the commander-in-chief of the ground forces, Field Marshal Walter von Brauchitsch, wrote in his diary: "Von Bock said that he wanted to go on the offensive on the front of Guderian 30.9, and in other areas - 2.10. In any case, between these two phases of the offensive there must be a break of at least 48 hours. Field Marshal Fedor von Bock himself, commander of Army Group Center, noted in his diary on the same day : that Guderian was allowed to advance on 30 September.

For me, it's better if he has a little head start, because he is still quite far from

the right flank, on which the main blow will be struck, and the return from the actions of tanks can be expected only 4-5 days after the start of the operation. Other commanders will be ready by October 2, only Goth (3rd Panzer Group) proposes October 3.

In fact, such a two-day separation of the start time of the offensive in different directions made it possible to hope that the Soviet reserves would be first of all transferred to repel Guderian's attack, which would make it easier to launch an offensive in the main direction. The poor coordination of the actions of the three Soviet fronts also had an effect here.

In practice, such coordination, as we have already said, was to be carried out by the Headquarters, which, however, had to pay attention to all strategic areas, and therefore it was catastrophically late in making decisions to repel the Typhoon. On October

2, Halder wrote with satisfaction in his diary: "The main forces of the army group have gone on the offensive (" Typhoon ") and are successfully advancing. Guderian believes that his formations broke through the enemy defenses to the full depth. The formations of the Guderian group, operating in

the center, are rapidly advancing on Oryol. The 2nd Army fought stubborn battles while crossing the Desna. She managed to cross the river and push the enemy back by about 5 km. The 4th Panzer Group scattered the resisting enemy groups and advanced 15 km in depth. The troops of the 4th Army are successfully advancing on the entire front and have advanced an average of 6-12 km. On October 4, he writes: "Operation

Typhoon is developing almost classically. The tank group of Guderian, advancing through Orel, reached Mtsensk without encountering any resistance. Göppner's tank group quickly broke through the enemy's defenses and went to Mozhaisk. The Goth tank group reached the Hill, thus approaching the upper reaches of the Dnieper, and in the north advanced to the White. The enemy continues to hold unattacked sections of the front everywhere, as a result of which a deep encirclement of

these enemy groups is outlined in the future. The reason for the encirclement of a large number of Soviet divisions was an unsuccessful grouping

areas were poorly covered. It was on them that the German tank groups hit. And the order to withdraw was very late. It was received only on October 5, but already on October 7, the tank groups of Guderian and Goth closed the ring around Vyazma. And only on October 12, all the troops operating in the Western direction were actually united under the command of the newly appointed commander of the Western Front, G.K. Zhukov. As M. Khodarenok and B. Nevzorov note, "on the central sector of the Soviet-German front, seven field headquarters of the armies (out of 15), 64 divisions (out of 95), 11 tank brigades (out of 13) and 50 artillery regiments of the RGC (out of 64). These formations and units were part of 13 armies and one operational group. The summary of the German command following the results of the Vyazemsky battle spoke of 663 thousand prisoners, 1242 captured Soviet tanks and 5412 guns. The German Army Group Center lost 145,000 killed, wounded and missing. 85 thousand people managed to get out of the Vyazemsky cauldron, and about 23 thousand people from the Bryansk one. Let's add to them 98 thousand servicemen from the 29th and 33rd armies who escaped encirclement, the Ermakov group and from the 22nd army, in which only one division was surrounded.

The defeat of the troops of the Western, Reserve and Bryansk fronts in October 1941 created the prerequisites for the offensive of the German Army Group Center directly on the Soviet capital. Only the unfavorable weather conditions of the autumn thaw did not allow the Germans to immediately build on their success and go directly to Moscow, which at that moment was still very poorly protected. In the future, the courage of the defenders of Moscow, the approach of reserves from the depths of the country, as well as the difficulties of supplying the German troops in the winter, the insufficient preparation of the Wehrmacht for the winter campaign frustrated the Typhoon plan and did not allow the German troops to capture the capital. The former commander of the 3rd Panzer Group, Heinrich Goth, not without reason, asserted: "It was not the Russian winter, but the autumn rains that put an end to the German offensive. It rained day and night, the rain fell continuously, interspersed with snow. The roads were wet and traffic stopped. Lack

materials and food determined the tactical and operational situation for the next three weeks. But everything cannot be reduced to the weather, and specifically to the autumn thaw, as the German generals do. Why, the fact that the weather prevented the march on Moscow was, in fact, one of the miscalculations of the Germans. There was no military secret in the fact that in the second half of October thaw begins in Central Russia and that the majority of Russian roads are by no means European highways.

In general, it can be stated that the reasons for the rapid defeat of the Soviet troops near Bryansk and Vyazma in October 1941 were as follows: poor preparation of defensive lines due to the fact that the transition to the defense of the Western, Bryansk and Reserve fronts was carried out late; poor coordination of the actions of the three Soviet fronts in the Western direction, which in fact did not have a single leadership; incorrect determination of the directions of the main attack of the German troops; belated permission to depart; rapid loss of control of troops by Soviet commanders after the breakthrough of the front. The blame for all this lies both with the Headquarters and with the command

of the fronts. The troops of the Western and Reserve fronts, as already mentioned, were located in an alternating band, and most of the armies of the Reserve Front, being the second echelon of the Western, did not obey the commander of this latter, which made it difficult to conduct defensive battles. Due to the lack of radio communications and combat experience, the commanders of the armies and fronts relied more on wire communications and on delegates sent to the troops. But in combat conditions, wire communications often broke, and the delegates could not find the headquarters, which often changed their place of deployment due to the fact that the enemy had broken through the front and had to quickly retreat. The organization of the command of the troops covering the Moscow direction also left much to be desired. The three fronts had 16 armies, which, in turn, were subordinate to 95 divisions and 13 tank brigades. On one army headqu



divisions and about one tank brigade. This was one and a half to two times more than in one German army corps, numbering from three to five divisions. After the catastrophic defeats of the first months of the war, the corps link was liquidated - allegedly due to a lack of experienced staff personnel.

However, in fact, the functions of corps headquarters in our country began to be performed by army headquarters. It is no coincidence that the number of German corps headquarters was approximately equal to the number of army headquarters of the Soviet troops opposing them. But each Soviet headquarters had a significantly larger number of formations than each German, and there were

fewer means of communication, which only increased the chaos.

On the other hand, there were several times more armies in the Red Army than in the Wehrmacht. In October 1941, three field armies and three tank groups subordinate to them advanced on Moscow. All of them were combined into one army group

"Center". Accordingly, for the Soviet troops opposing them, the following structure would be optimal: 1 front, 3-4 armies, 16 corps headquarters. But the number of divisions could easily be reduced so as not to overload the corps headquarters. After all, we had less means of communication than the Germans.

Therefore, it would be worthwhile to have fewer divisions, but relatively larger numbers, in order to reduce their total number and thereby increase the provision of their headquarters with radio stations. But, unfortunately, the Soviet Headquarters acted in the exact opposite way. After heavy losses in the first weeks of the war, the strength of the rifle divisions was reduced from the pre-war 14,483 to 10,858

on 29 July 1941. And this despite the fact that the number of German infantry divisions reached the state of 16,859 people. If, in terms of staff strength, Soviet rifle divisions would be approximately equal to German infantry divisions, if Soviet tank brigades were deployed, like the Germans in a division, that is, reinforced by motorized infantry (in terms of the number of tanks, two Soviet tank brigades of that time were approximately equal to one German tank divisions), then in the Moscow direction there would be about 61 ri

headquarters, in turn, consolidated into four armies. Then, probably, the control system would be more harmonious and decisions would be made and brought to parts and formations faster. But in practice, the Red Army used a completely different organizational strategy. The passion for megalomania, characteristic of the Soviet era, prevailed. Let there be more divisions in number - it looks more solid. Let there be armies instead of corps. Firstly, there will be more general posts with big stars. Secondly, if necessary, it will be easier for the army commander to turn not only to the front commander, but also to the Headquarters itself, despite the fact that this will increase confusion in command and control. In the last year of the war, Hitler also suffered from a passion for the formation of new divisions instead of replenishing existing ones. Perhaps this helped him downplay in his own mind the scale of the defeats suffered by the Wehrmacht. The leadership of the Red Army, however, was distinguished by such passion throughout the war. During the battle

of Vyazemsky, all three commanders of the Soviet fronts, quickly losing contact with the troops, went to those armies that, as they thought, were subjected to the main blows of the enemy, leaving their headquarters at their former locations. The same thing happened to many army commanders. As a result, the troops received conflicting orders from the commanders and their headquarters, as well as from the Headquarters. In parallel, the commanders were looking for their headquarters, the headquarters for the commanders, and the Stavka for both. Purely theoretically, in conditions of poor communication and coordination of actions, it would be more reasonable to build defense in one echelon. After all, the armies of the second echelon in practice did not have time to take part in repelling the German offensive and for the most part died surrounded. And so, if the density of defense due to the second echelons had been increased, the Germans had spent more time and effort on the breakthrough, and a significant part of the Soviet troops would probably have been able to avoid encirclement. But neither Stalin, nor his generals and marshals wanted to admit even to themselves t

far surpassed the Red Army, weakened by repressions, and that for a more successful fight against it, it was necessary to use the tactics of the weakest against the strongest. On October 2, when the German Army Group Center launched an offensive against Moscow, Budyonny, who was at that moment in the battle formations of the 43rd Army, helped the army command to organize the defense. But the enemy broke through the entire tactical depth of the army's defense in eight hours of the offensive and reached the positions of the divisions of the second echelon. Semyon Mikhailovich outlined a counterattack, but it took at least 2.5 days to concentrate troops, even with vehicles. And vehicles were sorely lacking. Most importantly, in two or three days, the enemy's strike group, numbering up to nine infantry and four tank divisions, would have moved further east, and the counterattack would have hit an empty place, even if by some miracle the divisions and brigades intended for it would succeed collect. In addition, Budyonny approximately halved the strength of the Germans. Here the long-standing illness of the entire Soviet society, which did not pass even the Red Army, affected: the desire to embellish reality in reports to the authorities in order to avoid punishment. The commanders, in reports to the headquarters of the armies and the front, underestimated the number of enemy troops that had made a breakthrough so that the situation would not look catastrophic. They naively hoped that they would still be able to improve the situation. But the enemy preempted the deployment of Soviet reserves, since his divisions had much greater mobility. In addition, many bridges went to the Germans intact

condition.

Defense Budyonny was never able to organize. Even worse, on September 30, two days before the German offensive, he started a regrouping of troops. As a result, three divisions were removed from the front of the 33rd Army, and a replacement for them, despite the report of the army command, was not sent. As a result, a gap of 14 kilometers formed in the battle formations of the 33rd Army, covered only by a few rifle companies. The Germans hit there. They bypassed the positions of the 43rd Army from the left flank. On October 5, Budyonny reported to Headquarters that on the left flank of the Reserve

front, an extremely difficult situation was created. There is nothing to close the German breakthrough along the Moscow highway. The front, on its own, cannot detain the enemy in the direction Spas-Demensk - Vskhody - Vyazma, and Spas-Demensk - Yukhnov - Medyn cannot. Budyonny asked for help with aviation and to pull up the reserves of the high command. On the same day, the Stavka agreed, at the suggestion of Budyonny, to withdraw troops to the Vederniki-Mosalsk-Zhizdra line, but it was too late. German troops advanced already west of this line. Soon communication with the command of the Western Front and with the Headquarters was cut off. The front headquarters also lost contact with the armies. Early in the morning of October 8, Budyonny arrived at Maloyaroslavets with his staff. He did not know that on that very day the Headquarters replaced him as commander of the Reserve Front with G.K. Zhukov. On the way to the Yukhnov-Vyazma highway, Semyon Mikhailovich almost died when he collided with German tanks. The main part of the headquarters ended up on the 105th kilometer from Moscow, in the forest behind the railway bridge across Protva. Budyonny found him only with the help of Zhukov, who met Semyon Mikhailovich in Maloyaroslavets. On October 6, a remarkable conversation took place over a direct wire between the Chief of the General Staff, Marshal B. M. Shaposhnikov, and the Chief of Staff of the Reserve Front,

General A. V. Anisov: “**Anisov:** Communications with the 303rd Rifle Division could not be established during the day. The 33rd Army as an organism does not yet exist. In Krasnoye Losmino there is a commander and a member of the Military Council, there is no headquarters, where is unknown. There are also no means of communication. The commander of the operational department and the liaison officer sent out on two planes and one car to search for the headquarters of the army and divisions have not yet returned. No data on the situation of units 33 And

the headquarters of the front does not have ... Urgent sending of armed reinforcements of at least 30 thousand is necessary. That's all.

**Shaposhnikov:** It is not clear to me for whom to send armed reinforcements, when in your report you did not name a single rifle or artillery regiment, not

apparently without weapons and materiel. It is possible to lose contact, but not to such an extent that it is impossible to get through the intermittent front of the enemy to units that, no doubt, exist somewhere and, in all likelihood, are fighting. Apparently, the liaison officers you sent were not brave enough to carry out their tasks. It is necessary to send more energetic and intelligent commanders for this. What is important for us is not the search for the commanders of the armies, but the military organisms ... **Anisov:** Replenishment is needed, because the 24th Army suffered heavy losses, but almost completely retained its materiel.

**Shaposhnikov:** Where is the front commander?

**Anisov:** The front commander left for Maloyaroslavets at about 2 p.m., and from there he intends to go to Kaluga to check the work of the headquarters commanders sent to this direction and to establish contact with the formations arriving in this area ... He was not going to return here, because today it is planned to move to that area our headquarters.

**Shaposhnikov:** Where exactly is the headquarters going? Keep in mind that during the transition there is a connection with you both in the old and in the new place ... I have everything. Report as soon as you get something, at least about one regiment. Commenting on this document, the military historian L. N. Lopukhovsky notes: "According to Zhukov, he found Budyonny on October 8 on the outskirts of Maloyaroslavets in the district executive committee, who had two cars. What did he do for a whole day in isolation from the headquarters and without means of communication? The impression is that he was hiding both from the Headquarters and from his own headquarters, so as not to answer questions, the answers to which he still did not know. And the chief of staff took the rap for the commander as best he could. What was his request to send not divisions and regiments, but 30,000 armed reinforcements! Where? Why? In what categories did the chief of staff, General Anisov, think? What materiel could be mastered in the 24th Army in an environment of uncontrolled withdrawal? Well, the words are bitter, but well deserved by Budyonny and the leadership of the Reserve Front. And what is the Marshal's explanation of his trip to the Kaluga region to the need to personally che

did he look for them? It seems that Semyon Mikhailovich really tried by hook or by crook to evade responsibility for another defeat. On October 8, in the afternoon, Zhukov found Budyonny in Maloyaroslavets and acquainted him with the directive of the Headquarters on his removal from the post of commander of the Reserve Front. After that, Semyon Mikhailovich left for Moscow. On October 10, the Reserve Front was included in the Western Front, commanded by Zhukov. Konev remained his deputy. As for Budyonny, he remained out of work for almost a month. Finally, at the beginning of November, when the situation near Moscow had more or less stabilized and the German offensive had stalled, Stalin instructed him to organize a military parade on Red Square on 7 November. Mikhail Solovyov states: "Tymoshenko and Budyonny lost gigantic armies in minor operations. A rumor was circulating in Moscow that Stalin met the unlucky commanders in a paternal way: he beat him with a stick. This rumor, of course, was absurd: it was not the royal business to beat his subjects with a stick with his own hand, even if they were in the rank of marshal. Yes, and not on secondary operations, Stalin's marshals lost hundreds of thousands of fighters, but on the most

important strategic directions - Western and South Western. For the catastrophe near Vyazma and Bryansk, Budyonny, like two other front commanders, did not suffer any punishment. Perhaps Stalin, in the depths of his soul, was aware that the main fault lay with him and the General Staff, and did not punish either Konev, or Budyonny, or Eremenko. After all, all three made exactly the same mistakes - they went to the battle formations of the troops, lost contact with the armies and with their own headquarters, were late with a quick withdrawal, which alone could reduce the scale of the catastrophe, could not properly inform the Headquarters about the position of their troops. Moreover, they did not set specific tasks for defense to subordinates, but offered to develop them themselves, and then submit them for approval. This only led to the loss of precious time, and in conditions of poor communication it turned out to be unfea

besides, he was a national hero and a man unconditionally devoted to Stalin. There was no way to order him. But then it was also not very convenient to punish the rest for failure. Or maybe the Supreme Commander simply decided that it would be unreasonable to repress or dismiss three high-ranking military leaders at once: a worthy replacement for them at the moment will still not be found. And in 1942, all three again commanded the fronts.

Semyon Mikhailovich always, both in the Civil War and in the Great Patriotic War, strove to be in the battle formations of the troops in order to see the course of the battle himself. In Civil War, when there were 10-15 thousand people under his command, such manners of the "field commander" still justified themselves. Budyonny had to maintain his authority in front of the Red Army, and the risk of dying was not so great. Indeed, in a saber battle, Budyonny had no equal, and the density of fire was incomparably less than in both world wars. But in the Great Patriotic War, when Semyon Mikhailovich had to lead hundreds of thousands of people, for the management of which modern means of communication were needed, such participation in attacks and a long stay on the front line became simply disastrous. And the point is not only that the risk of dying or being wounded has increased many times (remember that Tyulenev and Voroshilov were wounded, who recklessly went on the attack along with the infantry). Even worse was the fact that during long excursions to the front line, command and control of the troops was hopelessly lost. And this, as a rule, led to catastrophic failures and heavy losses. Yes, the Great Patriotic War was clearly not Budyonny's war. With all his heart and mind, Semyon

Mikhailovich forever remained "on that distant, on Grazhdanskaya". On November 7, 1941, Budyonny commanded a parade on Red Square, which was held despite the danger of German air raids (although the weather was non-flying). Then Semyon Mikhailovich stood next to Stalin on the mausoleum and listened to the speech of the Supreme: "The whole world looks at you as a force capable of destroying the predatory hordes of German in

great ancestors - Alexander Nevsky, Dmitry Donskoy, Kuzma Minin, Dmitry Pozharsky, Alexander Suvorov, Mikhail Kutuzov! May the victorious banner of the great Lenin overshadow you! General M.F. Lukin, who was wounded and

taken prisoner near Vyazma, during interrogation at the headquarters of the Army Group Center, offering the Germans to form an anti-communist Russian counter-government, spoke of the Soviet commanders as follows: "Today in the USSR there are only two people who are quite popular, - this is Budyonny and Tymoshenko. Budyonny is a man of the people, in 1938 Stalin did not like him very much, and many people know this. If Budyonny and Timoshenko had led the uprising, then perhaps a lot of blood would not have been shed. But they must also be sure that there will be Russia and the Russian government. Both Budyonny and Timoshenko are not very fond of communist principles, and although they were products of the Bolshevik system, they could come forward if they saw an alternative. The new Russia does not have to be the same as the old one. It may even be without Ukraine, Belarus and the Baltic states, being on good terms with Germany. So help in creating such a Russia and a government is only in your power, and not in ours. Zhukov and Shaposhnikov are not that popular, but they are very good soldiers. True, I do not think that the newly formed divisions will be able to conduct offensive operations; they can only defend well. Very many do not want to fight, and when our attackers were on the offensive, they were often taken prisoner very easily. In the area south of Yartsevo, you had 50 guns on one kilometer of the front, but our infantry still had to advance three times. There were a lot of dead, and very many did not want to break out of the encirclement, but surrendered. Still, the losses amounted to at least 10

thousands of people".

Mikhail Fedorovich, obviously, did not know about the parade that took place on November 7, otherwise he would hardly have risked enrolling Semyon Mikhailovich in the ranks of those who are ready to rebel against Stalin. Perhaps Lukin heard rumors about the testimony of the participants in the "military fascist conspiracy" against Budyonny and Timoshenko, and he



inclined to take them at face value. Or maybe the captured general, talking about the opposition of the two first persons in the leadership of the Red Army, tried in this way to convince the Germans that the Russian anti-Bolshevik government would have someone to rely on, and, having managed to win over Budyonny and Timoshenko, it would convince the Red Army to stop resistance and quickly end the war. It is superfluous to prove that neither Semyon Mikhailovich nor Semyon Konstantinovich ever dreamed of an uprising against Stalin. Timoshenko - however, already after the end of the war - generally intermarried with the leader, passing off his daughter

Ekaterina for his son Vasily. On December 5, Soviet troops launched a counteroffensive near Moscow. As a result, Army Group Center was thrown back from Moscow by 150–200 kilometers. This was the first major defeat of the German land army in World War II and the first major success of Soviet weapons of strategic importance. But at that moment Budyonny was no longer in the Moscow direction. Shortly after the November 7 parade, Semyon Mikhailovich went to Stalingrad to inspect the defensive structures. There was a conflict between the engineer A. N. Komarovsky, who proposed an advanced method for building pillboxes from prefabricated reinforced concrete parts, and specialists from Headquarters, who demanded monolithic reinforced concrete. Having understood the essence of what was happening, having personally tested the structures for strength and damage by artillery fire, Budyonny defended the new method. The headquarters agreed with the opinion of Budyonny and gave the go-ahead. As a result, the enemy later suffered heavy losses and lost a lot of time, breaking through the line of long-term defensive structures of Stalingrad. True, ironically, when Paulus's army itself was surrounded, now the Soviet troops had to overcome the same fortifications with heavy losses. After visiting Stalingrad, Budyonny went to the Crimea, where he demanded that I.E. Petrov, commander of the Separate Primorsky Army, stay in Sevastopol.

allowing the transfer of German troops from the Crimea to the Caucasus or near Moscow. On December 5, 1941, as a representative of the Stavka Budyonny on Taman, he led the preparation of the landing on the Kerch Peninsula, which ended in success. However, in January 1942, the German-Romanian troops managed to take Feodosia from the Soviet 51st Army. But then the Soviet troops held Kerch.

On April 21, 1942, Budyonny was appointed commander-in-chief of the North Caucasian direction, and in May - commander of the North Caucasian Front. Already on April 22, Budyonny visited the headquarters of the Crimean Front and reported that there was no defense in depth on the Kerch Peninsula and that the troops might not be able to withstand the strike of the 11th German army. On May 8, the Germans broke through the defenses of the 44th Army. Already on May 10, the Headquarters ordered the withdrawal of the troops of the Crimean Front to Kerch. Stalin demanded that Budyonny leave immediately for Kerch. Budyonny and Admiral Isakov got there by boat on May 12. Semyon Mikhailovich, after a meeting with the front command, assessed the situation as hopeless and ordered to stop the transfer of goods to the Kerch Peninsula and immediately begin evacuation, sending all the ships available on Taman for this. But so far only heavy weapons have been evacuated. Only on May 14, when the Germans broke into the outskirts of Kerch, was the Stavka authorized a general evacuation, which was carried out quite unsuccessfully. As a result, the bulk of the troops defending on the Kerch Peninsula (up to 170 thousand people) were captured. But Stalin did not punish Budyonny for the Crimean catastrophe either. After all, Semyon Mikhailovich honestly warned that the troops were not prepared for defense and would not withstand a serious German offensive. In addition, the command of the Crimean Front and the representative of the Stavka, the head of the GlavPUR L. 3. Mekhlis, were directly responsible for the hostilities on the Kerch Peninsula. They were asked. Appointing Budyonny as commander of the North Caucasian direction and front, Stalin hoped that in his native places the popularity of the legendary commander of the First Cavalry would force the local I

Moreover, many Kuban and Don Cossacks and mountaineers of the North Caucasus willingly joined the ranks of the Wehrmacht, which they saw as a liberator from the Bolsheviks. On July 28, 1942, the armies of the Southern Front were included in the North Caucasian Front. After the Soviet troops abandoned Rostov, Budyonny believed that now it would be possible to stop the enemy only on the Terek and in the foothills of the Caucasus. He wrote to Headquarters: "The main and main line of defense should be the Terek River and the Caucasus Range. For the defense of naval bases - Novorossiysk, Anapa, Tuapse - the 47th Army with a separate rifle corps should be operationally subordinated to the Black Sea Fleet. However, Soviet troops in the Caucasus still continued to retreat. To restore order there, as a representative of the Headquarters, a member of the State Defense Committee and People's Commissar of Internal Affairs L.P. Beria was sent. Already on September 1, 1942, he sent the following characteristic telegram to Stalin: "I consider it expedient to appoint Tyulenev as commander of the Transcaucasian Front (Lavrenty Pavlovich suggested merging the North Caucasian Front with the Transcaucasian. - B.S.), who, with all the shortcomings, is more suitable for this **appointment** than Budyonny. It should be noted that in connection with his retreats, Budyonny's authority in the Caucasus has fallen significantly, not to mention the fact t

business ... "According to Maria Vasilievna Budyonny," during the war, when Beria, without the knowledge of Semyon Mikhailovich, began to rearrange military units at his own discretion in the North Caucasus, Semyon Mikhailovich got angry and went to Stalin, he did not

support Semyon Mikhailovich: - Beria himself is a Caucasian, he it is better to

know how to arrange parts in the Caucasus. "But Beria is not a military man, but a Chekist," objected Semyon

Mikhailovich, "this is not the same thing." Probably, here we have an echo of the conflict that led to the above-quoted telegram from Beria to Stalin. However, it is unlikely that this conflict in itself caused a shift

Budyonny from the post of commander of the North Caucasian Front and the direction that followed on September 2. There were more compelling reasons. First, since the Germans had already approached the Main Caucasian Range and were about to break into the Transcaucasus, it was, of course, expedient to place all Soviet troops in the Caucasus under a single command. Secondly, considering that only a retreat was associated with the name of Budyonny in the troops, and he did not show himself as Napoleon during the battles in the North Caucasus, it would be better to replace him with Tyulenev, who had not yet fought, who did not yet have the reputation of a "general retreat" and which in terms of business qualities still surpassed Semyon Mikhailovich. In addition, Tyulenev had commanded the Transcaucasian Front for four years and knew the theater of operations well. The circumstances of this trip of Beria to the Caucasus are well described in the memoirs of the then Deputy Chief of the Operations Department of the General Staff S. M. Shtemenko. Beria, whose name during the period when Shtemenko wrote his memoirs was forbidden to be mentioned in the open press, operates here under the pseudonym of the Chief of the Operational Directorate of the General Staff, Lieutenant General P. I. Bodin. Shtemenko writes: "Only a few days after being called to Headquarters, namely on August 21, P. I. Bodin announced to me: "Get ready, tomorrow at 4 o'clock you will go with me to the airfield. Grab the cipher clerk and a few referrals. I didn't really need to prepare at the time. I knew all the data in my direction by heart, and we lived right there, where we worked, on Kirovskaya. In the morning, at the appointed time, we drove in Bodin's car to the Central Airfield. The C-47 plane was already waiting for us there. Bodin introduced himself as the commander of the ship, Colonel V. G. Grachev. We flew to Tbilisi through Central Asia. The direct route there was already blocked by the Germans. We landed in Krasnovodsk in the evening, and when it got completely dark, we went across the Caspian Sea to Baku, Tbilisi. We landed in Tbilisi almost at midnight and went straight from the airfield to the front headquarters. The city has not yet slept. Many of the streets were

P. I. Bodin immediately heard the report of the chief of staff of the front, A. I. Subbotin, and explained what tasks we had arrived with. There were quite a few of them: to clarify the situation on the spot, to outline additional measures to strengthen the defense of Transcaucasia and put them into practice, to create reserves from the troops that retreated and retreat to Transcaucasia from the north, as well as by mobilizing new contingents from the local population, and, finally, to speed up preparation of defensive lines, primarily in the Baku direction. In

conclusion, Bodin turned to the front commander: "Do you know that the allies are trying to use our difficult situation on the fronts and wrest consent to the entry of British troops into the Transcaucasus?" This, of course, cannot be allowed. The State Defense Committee considers the defense of Transcaucasia to be the most important state task, and we are obliged to take all measures to repel the onslaught of the enemy, bleed him, and then defeat

him. The hopes of Hitler and the desires of the allies must be buried... Our practical activity here began with the fact that already on August 24 martial law was introduced in Transcaucasia. All the troops that were retreating in an organized manner from the north were put on the defensive on the Terek, in the foothills of the Caucasus Range, in the Tuapse and Novorossiysk directions. And those units and formations that turned out to be bloodless in the previous battles, lost their controls or weapons, were withdrawn to the rear. On August 28, the 58th Army began to form in the main Baku direction.

A consolidated cavalry corps was concentrated in the Kizlyar area ... A difficult situation developed on the Taman Peninsula and in Novorossiysk, where the bases of our fleet were located. From here the enemy intended to contribute to the attack on Tuapse, and here his successes were more serious. In late August - early September, he recaptured the peninsula and captured most of Novorossiysk. For the 47th Army and parts of the fleet, defending this largest port on the Black Sea coast, a critical situation arose. The outcome of the struggle was decided by the steadfastness of t

decisions and the firmness of their implementation. We believed that in this area, first of all, reliable command and control of troops should be organized. On September 1, on the basis of the North Caucasian Front, the Black Sea Group of Forces was created there, subordinate to the Transcaucasian Front. A few days later, the hero of the defense of Sevastopol, Lieutenant-General I.E. Petrov, took command of this group. The Military Council of the Front proposed to appoint Major General A. A. Grechko as the commander of the 47th Army and the entire Novorossiysk defensive region, and Rear Admiral S. G. Gorshkov as the head of the defense of the city of Novorossiysk itself. This proposal was approved by the Stavka. The results were immediate. On September 10, Soviet troops stopped the enemy in the eastern part of Novorossiysk between cement plants and forced him to go on the defensive. The main Caucasian ridge was not included in the zone of operations of either the Black Sea or the Northern groups. The 46th Army defending it, in theory, should have been directly subordinate to the front command. But then a special body appeared at the headquarters of the front, called the headquarters of the defense forces of the Caucasian ridge. It was headed by General G. L. Petrov from the NKVD. It must be said frankly that it was a completely unnecessary, far-fetched intermediate instance. In fact, this headquarters replaced the control of the 46th Army. Things clearly did not go well with the defense of the mountains. The front command exaggerated their inaccessibility too much, for which already on August 15 they paid with the Klukhorsk pass. The Marukh Pass was about to be taken, as a result of which there would be a threat of the Germans going south to the Black Sea. Mistakes made were corrected in the most hasty manner. Detachments of climbers and residents of high mountain regions, in particular Svans, were urgently formed and sent to protect the passes. There, on the passes, additional forces from the personnel troops were pulled up. In the area of Krasnaya Polyana, the enemy was blocked by the 20th mountain rifle division under the command of Colonel A.P. Turchinsky, the 23rd border and 33rd mechanized regiments of the NKVD. Further to the east, a large de

units of the 394th Rifle Division of Lieutenant Colonel I. G. Kantaria and other troops were defending. Armed detachments of workers also advanced into the mountains. The entire multinational family of the peoples of the Caucasus rose up against the enemy. On the battle lines and behind enemy lines, there was a disastrous struggle for uninvited guests. The Brotherhood of Nations has withstood all trials. Calculations of the invaders on his weakness completely failed. It was to this time that the events in the area of the Marukh pass date back. In very difficult conditions, its heroic defenders repelled all attempts by German mountain detachments to capture the pass and break through here through the Main Caucasian Range.

They fulfilled their soldier's duty to the end. Fierce battles were fought on the Terek. The 1st Panzer Army was advancing there, which included two enemy army and three tank corps. The blow was delivered with the expectation of breaking out simultaneously to the Caspian coast and to the Georgian Military Highway.

However, neither there nor here did the German troops achieve success. The struggle on the outskirts of Ordzhonikidze and Grozny ended for them in complete failure and heavy losses. No matter how hard the enemy fought, he could not get to Grozny and Baku oil. And at the

same time, his plan to open a way to the Middle East failed. Things did not work out in the Black Sea direction either, although the Germans showed exceptional activity there, especially near Tuapse. Since the end of September, after a thorough regrouping, they launched a second attack with the clear intention of encircling and destroying the main forces of the 18th Army. Once again, the threat loomed over the sea coast. Under these conditions, the Headquarters and the Military Council of the front reinforced the army with fresh forces, and in mid-October General A. A. Grechko was sent to command it. Political work has also intensified. In the course of heavy

fighting, Soviet troops clung to the last mountain range on the outskirts of Tuapse, but did not let the enemy through ... More in the

Tuapse direction, the Nazi troops did not go on the

offensive. They did not overcome the Caucasus Range either, although a well-trained

captured the climbers' camp "Shelter of Eleven", but did not advance

further ... A month later we returned to Moscow. Contrary to the boastful statements of the command of the German Army Group "A" that the resistance of the Soviet troops would soon be broken, the situation in Transcaucasia stabilized. Only Lieutenant General P.I. Bodin was not with us - he was appointed chief of staff of the front. But he did not have long to hold this high post. On November 1, Bodin died: he fell under the bombing of German aircraft in the Ordzhonikidze area, did not want to lie on the ground for safety and I paid for it with my life." Why

does the chief of the Operational Directorate of the General Staff suddenly begin to speak on behalf of the State Defense Committee? And why does the lieutenant general, not at all embarrassed, reprimand Marshal Budyonny, commander of the front? Yes, because this monologue was actually delivered not by Bodin, but by Beria, there is no doubt about it. The General Commissar of State Security could not only reprimand the marshal, but, if necessary, erase it into camp dust. I note that all the measures for the defense of the Transcaucasus, taken during the stay of Beria, Shtemenko, a very qualified General Staff officer, considered correct 45 years later. It was also completely safe to replace Beria in the memoirs with the deceased P.I. Bodin (I note that during the same bombing, a member of the

Military Council of the Front, L.M. To justify Budyonny, it can be noted that back in early August 1942, Semyon Mikhailovich reported to Headquarters that the four armies of the North Caucasian Front had only 24,000 active bayonets, 94 aircraft, and not a single tank. Ammunition, food, medicines were also running out ... Stalin's dissatisfaction with Budyonny was caused both by the capture by the Germans of a number of passes of the Main Caucasian Range, and by their capture on August 9 by Maykop with its oil-bearing region. At the same time, the strategically important steel highway bridge across the Belaya was captured by German special forces from the Brandenburg training regiment safe and sound. Only during the fighting in the Te



The 3rd Panzer Corps took five thousand prisoners, and more than half of them voluntarily went over to the side of the Germans. This testified to the low morale of the troops subordinate to Budyonny, as well as to the fact that many representatives of the Caucasian peoples were not eager to fight for Soviet power. In fairness, we note

that the replacement of Budyonny by Tyulenev did not lead to a radical change in the situation in the Caucasus. The troops of the Transcaucasian Front continued to retreat. They stopped only by mid-November, and this was due to the fact that more and more German forces were absorbed by Stalingrad. And then, after the encirclement of the army of Paulus, the breakthrough of the Wehrmacht in Transcaucasia finally lost all relevance. The German command now had to think about how to get the hell out of there. And they managed to do this, while also holding the Taman bridgehead. There can be no doubt that the course of events would not have changed if the Transcaucasian Front had been headed not by Tyulenev, but by Budyonny.

And Semyon Mikhailovich would then be able to wear the laurels of the liberator of the North Caucasus. But Stalin needed new heroes for a new war. It is significant that even after the liberation of the North Caucasus, the old cavalryman Ivan Vladimirovich Tyulenev did not advance into the first rank of commanders of the Great Patriotic War. Perhaps this was due to Stalin's annoyance that the Germans from the Caucasus slipped away after all. But purely propaganda considerations also played a significant role here. Stalin understood that it would be better if the victories in the Great Patriotic War were associated in the people's memory with young generals, still unknown during the Civil War, but brought up entirely under the wise Stalinist leadership. According to Budyonny's daughter Nina, the father "understood that during this period there could be no other and it did not depend on his qualities. Dad knew that we

would have to retreat, and his main task was to save people.

"So he didn't expect to win?" asked the journalist interviewing the marshal's daughter.

"I didn't count," Nina Semyonovna confirmed. "He said that we were absolutely unprepared for this war." In principle, Budyonny proposed a strategy of exhausting the enemy that was not so absurd in the conditions of that time. She assumed that the Red Army had to mainly defend itself, and if it was impossible to hold positions, retreat in order to save strength. Semyon Mikhailovich, following the example of the Civil War, sought to minimize his own losses. As already mentioned, the Red Army was inferior to the Wehrmacht in terms of combat training and command, as well as in terms of technical equipment (especially in terms of motorization and communications). Therefore, for the Soviet troops, it was preferable to conduct simpler forms of hostilities, such as positional defense. In this case, it was quite possible to use the numerical advantage of the Soviet side and cover, if possible, all vulnerable areas. It was also advisable to use tanks mainly for defense purposes, mainly for direct support of infantry, since experience suggested that in large-scale tank battles, Soviet tankers were often defeated even in the last years of the war, when the superiority of the Red Army in people and equipment was overwhelming. However, Stalin, unlike Budyonny, was used to fighting without regard for the victims of his own army. At the beginning of the war, he counted on a blitzkrieg, and then, when the blitzkrieg failed, he still professed an offensive strategy. This was due to two reasons. First, Stalin sincerely believed that in this way it would be possible to defeat Hitler more quickly and depend less on the help of the Western allies. Secondly, he remembered well from the experience of the First World War that a long positional war had disintegrated the Russian army, which became the main cause of the revolution. Budyonny did not fit into the Stalinist strategy of crushing in relation to the conditions of the Great Patriotic War. Therefore, Stalin did not entrust him with a single offensive operation in 1943-1945, when the Red Army was already advancing. Semyon Mikhailovich, it seems, did not have such an impressive

Stalin's ruthlessness towards his own soldiers, which was, for example, Georgy Konstantinovich Zhukov. But that's why Zhukov defended Moscow, and not Budyonny. In January 1943, Budyonny was appointed commander of the Red Army cavalry. It was a purely decorative post that did not imply the direct management of hostilities. Probably, Stalin took into account, among other things, that in 1943 Semyon Mikhailovich would turn 60 years old and it was no longer as easy for him as young people to command troops on the battlefield. Announcing Budyonny about the new appointment, Stalin confidentially outlined to him the basics of the Soviet strategy after Stalingrad: "We will win, there is no doubt about it. Let's break the back of the fascist beast. We will win even if the Allies do not open a second front in Europe. But we cannot talk about victory abstractly. We need to crush the enemy and bring him to his knees as quickly as possible. However, the enemy is still strong. Tough battles lie ahead. We will need the utmost exertion of forces, great sacrifices. And we must make sure that these sacrifices are not in vain. Suspicious fuss is going on in the enemy camp. The Hitlerite clique is making a big bet on discord between the USSR and the Allies. If the war drags on, the ruling circles of the United States and Britain may agree, if not to outright treason, then to a separate peace. These circles—and Churchill sets the tone for them—would very much like to preserve fascist Germany—albeit without Hitler—as an outpost against the USSR in the West. Churchill goes even further: he dreams of restoring pan-Land Poland, he protects the bourgeois Polish government. We must build up the force of blows and at the same time fight wisely, achieve victory in any battle with little bloodshed ... And some people abroad believed and still believe that the war will exhaust us to the utmost. We will turn out to be so exhausted that we will lose any possibility of influencing international politics, we will lose all international weight, and then we, even the undefeated, will be able to dictate any conditions. And we must enter Western Europe with a battle-hardened army. And then let the Churchills try to dictate the terms of

Stalin did not rule out that the Red Army would be able to defeat Germany and occupy the main countries of Western Europe even before the Anglo-American troops landed on the continent. But in a conversation with Budyonny, Joseph Vissarionovich presented two mutually exclusive demands to the Red Army. On the one hand, regardless of the victims, as soon as possible to bring the enemy to his knees and enter Western Europe. On the other hand, strive to win with little bloodshed. Of these installations, only the first was of practical importance - to move forward as soon as possible, regardless of losses. These words - "regardless of the victims" - are repeated in many orders and directives of the Headquarters and Stalin personally. The slogan "to fight with little bloodshed", also found in orders and in Stalin's conversations with front commanders, had a purely propaganda value. He was called upon to convince the fighters and commanders that the high chiefs care about saving their lives. A bitter saying was born among the people: in the first two years of the war, huge sacrifices were made in order to avoid defeat, and in the last two - in order to bring victory closer. Budyonny and the chief of staff of the cavalry, General I.S. Karpachev, developed a directive that ordered reinforced cavalry corps to be used in the direction of the main attack of the army in close cooperation with other branches of the military. The corps should have been transferred to help the artillery of the RGK, guards mortar units ("Katyushas"), special troops, and also attached to them rifle divisions. It was not allowed to use cavalry formations to independently break through fortified positions, capture strongholds, and also use cavalry in areas where it does not have freedom of operational maneuver. By the beginning of 1943, the Red Army included 26 cavalry divisions, numbering 239,000 men and 227,000 horses by May 1 of that year. Compared with the maximum number in 1941-1942, the personnel of the cavalry was reduced by about half. Some cavalry formations were reorganized into tank and mechanized corps. As the end of the war approaches

decreased, but the number of cavalry divisions did not change. At the end of the war with Japan, during which the Soviet cavalry made a thousand-kilometer raid through the Mongolian steppes, there were still 26 divisions. Such a large number of them was largely due to the presence in the ranks of the Red Army of a significant number of Kuban and Don Cossacks, who have long been accustomed to fighting on horseback. In the same 1943, the commander of the Transcaucasian Front, General Tyulenev, proposed to form a cavalry army consisting of seven divisions on the basis of the 4th Guards Cavalry Corps. Budyonny rejected this idea, explaining to Stalin, who at first positively perceived Tyulenev's idea that the Cavalry would be too vulnerable to enemy aircraft and artillery. At the suggestion of Budyonny, the Headquarters decided to create cavalry-mechanized groups. Semyon Mikhailovich, even before the war, came to the conclusion that the corps should consist of at least three cavalry divisions, as well as a tank brigade and artillery units. In addition, a motorized rifle division can be attached to the corps. Now these ideas have come true. The creation of cavalry-mechanized groups, where cavalymen united with tank and mechanized units, was an old Budennovsky idea. It is unlikely that this rational - horsemen only limited the mobility of mechanized units. Only in mountainous and wooded areas, where tanks and vehicles could not pass, was the use of cavalry truly justified. Meanwhile, in addition to the temporary cavalry-mechanized groups created in 1943–1945, in 1944 the permanent 1st Guards cavalry-mechanized group was created under the command of Lieutenant General I. A. Pliev as part of the 4th and 6th Guards cavalry and 7th mechanized corps. The Supreme did not forget about the external insignia in relation to Budyonny. April 25, 1943, in connection with the 60th anniversary, Semyon Mikhailovich was awarded the Order of Lenin. By order of Stalin, as the Supreme Commander, cavalry advanced training courses for the command staff of the Red Army

were renamed the Red Banner Higher Cavalry Officer School of the Red Army named after S. M. Budyonny. On May 1, 1944, Stalin issued an order on cavalry, prepared by Budyonny's headquarters: "Where cavalry formations are used massively, where they are reinforced by mechanized and tank formations and supported by aircraft, where they are used ... to strike at the rear of the enemy or to pursue ... there are cavalry formations always give a good combat effect. The 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Ukrainian fronts can serve as examples of the correct use of cavalry formations ... The 1st Baltic, former Western and 1st Belorussian Fronts can serve as examples of the improper use of cavalry. It is easy to see that the cavalry operated more successfully in the dry mountainous-wooded or forest-steppe (beams) areas of the south, and not in the wooded-marshy areas of the north and west, where the horses got stuck in the swamps. In open areas, especially before 1943, when German aviation dominated the battlefield, it was ineffective to use cavalry because of its vulnerability from the air. Only at the end of 1944 and in 1945, when there were almost no German aircraft over the battlefield, the cavalry could be effectively used in the steppes of Hungary. But in the mountains, both riders and horses quickly got tired, especially when moving up, and in the same Carpathians, the cavalry lost its mobility and did not cause significant harm to the enemy. On February 2, 1944, Budyonny presented the Stalingrad delegation with an honorary sword - a gift from the British King George VI. Semyon Mikhailovich increasingly had to perform purely representative functions. True, as a member of the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command, he took part in the planning of a number of strategic offensive operations. So, in the spring of 1944, together with the commanders of a number of fronts, he participated in a meeting at Headquarters, at which the plan of operations for the summer campaign was discussed, including the main offensive in Belarus - Operation Bagration and the subsequent strike in the Lvov-Sandomierz direction. At the same time, it was assumed that

revolt against the Germans. The German command became aware of this meeting in early May. However, Hitler did not begin to withdraw troops from the "Belarusian balcony", since in this case the Red Army, even before the start of the summer campaign, would have been at least in the Brest region and could

threaten Warsaw. Budyonny proposed to allocate four corps for the Bagration. Stalin agreed that this amount of cavalry would be enough. Pliev's cavalry-mechanized group operated on the 1st Belorussian Front, and the cavalry-mechanized group of Lieutenant General N. S. Oslikovsky - on the 2nd Belorussian Front. Budyonny visited Pliev before the offensive, promised to expedite the arrival of echelons with horses, advised how to organize interaction with mechanized units. After the start of the offensive, Semyon Mikhailovich was at the command post of the 65th Army of General P.I. Batov, with which the Pliev group interacted. The cavalymen acted successfully, although they suffered heavy losses, especially in horses. On April 30,

1945, in the dead of night, Stalin called Budyonny and announced the news of Hitler's suicide. And after the end of the war, on May 12, Stalin sent Budyonny to Berlin to check the situation in the city and provide the population with basic necessities. It was no longer a combat, but an economic task. During the Great Patriotic War, Budyonny was awarded the Order of Suvorov, 1st degree. But his own role in the war was small and was more limited to the formation of various formations, primarily reserve and cavalry, and to meetings with various delegations, Soviet and foreign. Actually, the general work of Semyon Mikhailovich was clearly unsuccessful. He never won a single battle, but suffered several very painful defeats.

## **Chapter Ten**

### **PEACEFUL LIFE AND FAMILY HAPPINESS**

Budyonny was always merciless towards enemies and retained hatred for them for a long time. This manifested itself in the first days after the Victory and slightly shocked the foreign military leaders. General Dwight Eisenhower, commander of the allied forces in Europe, who visited Moscow in August 1945, recalled: "On the day when the news of the victory over Japan arrived (August 14, when the Japanese government and the emperor announced their surrender; on this day, on the eve of Eisenhower's departure from Moscow, the American ambassador gave a reception in his honor.- **B.S .**), Marshal Budyonny seemed to have no enthusiasm for this. I asked him why he was not happy about the end of the war. He replied, "Oh yes, but we would have to keep fighting to kill more of those damned Japanese." The marshal seemed to be an attractive, kind and friendly person, but it was clear that he did not care at all that every day the war continued meant death or injury for hundreds

more Russian citizens. Mikhail Solovyov, already familiar to us, described the role of Budyonny in the Great Patriotic War and the reasons for his political and career vitality in the following way: "During the Second World War, the appearance of the officers of the Red Army changed greatly. The youth went up the hill. Unknown majors and captains became generals. The war made colonels Ro marshals.

New tenacious and assertive. They are better trained than the old ones. Something we learned from nine-year schools. Passed military schools and military academies. Better schooled, more self-confident and more subtle taste of ruling over people. But at the same time, the spirit of the old revolutionary generals lives in the new ones. Yes, and these commanders themselves - gray-haired, flabby, exhausted by life - do not leave the stage. The young army officers combine the thoughtlessness and inner emptiness of the older generation with the greedy and unscrupulous adaptability instilled in the new generation by the era of degenerate communism. The "new" continued the traditions of the "old" and finally reduced the art of war to a simple rule: "Beat." Marshal



Zhukov is one of the "old" ones, but his tactics are accepted by the entire army. When minefields had to be overcome during World War II, Zhukov sent infantry ahead. The soldiers exploded on the mines. Human bodies cleared the way through minefields for tanks. There were few tanks and they were valued, but in Russia, especially in Soviet Russia, they never knew how to value and did not want to value people. The spirit of rationalized Genghis Khanism. He will not die in the Soviet army as long as this army exists.

Therefore, from the galaxy of modern generals, we will choose two, in the guise of which the spirit of Genghis Khan manifests itself in the most open and expressive form. And the first of them will be Semyon Mikhailovich Budyonny, Marshal of the Soviet Union, holder of many orders, a dashing grunt in the past and a dashing reveler in the present, a former favorite of Stalin and, probably, now

patronized by Malenkov. Imagine a man of average height with a voluminous belly, clearly visible under an expensive fine-haired tunic. In combination with the abdomen, the chest appears sunken. On the chest - a scattering of orders and medals. In normal times, this scattering disappears and is replaced by blocks of sashes in three rows. A person has an exorbitantly low and narrow forehead, bushy eyebrows. The eyes are brownish, almost black. Long nose. The mouth is covered with a mustache, which has thinned out in old age. Mustache, eyebrows, hair - blue-black. Sometimes they take on a purple hue: this is when the hairdresser

overdoes it. Such is Marshal Budyonny. This marshal lives on the remnants of his former glory, which fell to him during the years of the Civil War and has not been increased by anything since then. He reminds me of an alarm clock. Such an alarm tower rises above the modest steppe grass, regally shakes its purple head, but no one needs this alarm. A flock of sheep will come across the place where the budyak grows, eat the grass around, but the sheep will only look with contempt at the budyak: live, useless, show off. That's right, and Budyonny. A cap with gold embroidery, the collar of the tunic is decorated with false gold, on the neck there is a diamond marshal's star, on the chest of the order, and you look at all this splendor

Budyaka is scarlet and fluffy, the trunk is juicy and thick, overfed with earthly juices. Of

all the marshals of Budyonny, I happened to get to know better and better than others. Marshals are a majestic people, and an insignificant journalist cannot reach them. But Budyonny was different. His "routine" nature made him useless in any department where he was sent, and therefore he was engaged in anything but business. Budyonny is a man of war. Not

a modern war, when everything is decided by machines and terrible deadly projectiles thrown over great distances, but the war that has sunk into eternity and was personified in people, in their personal prowess and fearlessness. Even in the imperial army, being a sergeant major, Budyonny drew attention to himself with his dashing. This quality remained with him even when the revolution pushed him to the surface and made him the commander of the red cavalry. By the end of the Civil War, Budyonny became one of the most popular revolutionary generals, an idol of the youth, who then lived in an excited premonition of the advancing kingdom of communism with its great social achievements. Strongly loved Budyonny glory and could hardly

live in the unknown.

After the Civil War, few managed to maintain the glory they had acquired, but Budyonny kept it, and although it has faded, the old marshal will not have to end his life in obscurity. Truly, Budyonny is the darling of fate, otherwise how could he stay at the top of the military hierarchy! After the Civil War, it was not easy to live on past merits alone. For high positions, at least elementary education was required, but Budyonny was never overloaded with knowledge. And yet he persevered. Perhaps his thoughtlessness contributed to this even more than genuine talent could have contributed if he had it.

The brilliant military career of Budyonny is based not on talent, not on success, not on work, but on simple luck. And perhaps the biggest success of Budyonny was that Stalin saw

in Budyonny is a complete example of thoughtless service, unreasoning humility. Such Stalin invariably patronized. The words of the defector Solovyov are evil and sometimes unfair, but in many ways they are accurate. The most interesting thing is that after the Great Patriotic War, Budyonny was able to exist quite comfortably, relying on the glory won in the Civil War. Moreover, this continued not only under Stalin, but also under

Khrushchev, and under Brezhnev. But Budyonny lost his military-political role already at the end of 1942, when he really stopped commanding the troops. After the war, Stalin in the army, from the Red renamed into the Soviet, relied, especially after the disgrace of Zhukov, on generals and marshals who had already advanced during the Great Patriotic War itself and were not directly connected with the horse-army grouping. Here you can name Vasilevsky, Sokolovsky, Konev and a number of other commanders. Budyonny now remains only a kind of living monument of a turbulent revolutionary era. After the Great Patriotic War, horse breeding became the main occupation of Semyon Mikhailovich for several years. In 1947, he was appointed Deputy Minister of Agriculture for Horse Breeding and Breeding. Budyonny concentrated his efforts on improving the food supply and carrying out breeding work in animal husbandry. Here is what a former employee of the Institute of Horse Breeding, now a guide of the Moscow Hippodrome, says: "Semyon Mikhailovich wrote 70 works on horse breeding, he wrote it himself, not referents. Under his editorship, the fundamental five-volume book "History of the Horse" was published. Under Khrushchev, the Horse Breeding Institute had to be transferred from Moscow to the Ryazan region. Semyon Mikhailovich provided the move. First he built residential buildings, and only then laboratories. And while Budyonny was alive, we lived like in Christ's bosom and hid from troubles under the marshal's mustache. At the Rostov hippodrome, races for the Budyonny prize are still held annually. But it is permissible to doubt that Budyonny wrote books and articles on horse breeding v

own thoughts and experience than in speeches at party congresses and other forums where the texts he voiced looked too smooth and featureless. Budyonny wrote the book

"On breeding work in horse breeding and horse breeding", which in some ways has not become outdated even today - at least in the part in which Budyonny relies on his practical experience in breeding the Budyonnovskaya and Terek breeds, on which he spent quarter of century. But the scientific value of this book is doubtful. At the session of VASKhNIL on May 5-9, 1949, the first after the pogrom of genetics at the sadly memorable session of 1948, Semyon Mikhailovich declared that livestock breeding should be built on the basis of "the advanced biological science of Michurin-Lysenko." Back in the 1930s, Semyon Mikhailovich appointed former cavalry commanders to the posts of directors of stud farms, who did not always correspond to new positions. He sometimes did good deeds. For example, in 1952 he made sure that the tax on fruit trees was canceled on the Don, which was unbearable for collective farmers and led to mass cutting down of orchards. As we have already mentioned, during the Yezhovshchina period, he saved many directors and workers of stud farms from repression. In October 1952, at the 19th Party Congress, Budyonny was transferred from member to candidate member of the Central Committee of the CPSU. However, this fact in itself was not a sign of the ensuing disgrace. The place of the marshal in the military hierarchy simply decreased, and his largely nominal post of commander of the cavalry, as well as the position of deputy minister of agriculture for horse breeding, clearly did not pull on a full member of the Central Committee. After all, Budyonny joined the Central Committee at the XVIII Party Congress in 1939, being the commander of the key Moscow Military District and Deputy People's Commissar of Defense, and this position assumed full membership in the Central Committee. According to Budyonny's daughter Nina, "Nikita Sergeevich Khrushchev kicked him out of the army ... In 1963, dad and other marshals were returning from big maneuvers, from the Totsk camps. He and Konev sat in Timoshenko's car and drank a little. And then Timoshenko denounced them to Khrushchev. Timoshenko did not like the pope because of the K

direction and demanded a retreat, but the Headquarters rested - and in no way. He understood that he would be removed, but did not want to go to failure - and he was indeed removed, instead of him they sent Marshal Timoshenko, the ex-People's Commissar of Defense,

the former Divisional Commander 6 in the First Cavalry. Dad says: "You and I are two marshals, let's send a telegram to Headquarters on our behalf and offer to leave Kyiv." And Tymoshenko replies: "Why will I substitute my head. We still have to run all the way to Alaska." Well, five hundred thousand people were captured, and Timoshenko rolled back further than Kharkov. He did not forgive his father for this and at every opportunity he knocked on him. And now he snitched: "Budyonny got drunk on the way and said that he believes in the collective leadership, but does not trust

anyone from the members of the collective leadership. So Nikita got rid of him. Dad had a pre-stroke condition, he went crazy - the army for him was everything in the world. But my mother was friends with Nina Petrovna Khrushcheva ... Mom went to Nina Petrovna, explained to her that all this was Tymoshenko's slander (although I'm sure that dad said it all). Then Nikita Sergeevich said: "Let him write a

letter of repentance." Dad repented, and they threw him a piece - they put him in DOSAAF. And in order to please dad, to somehow smooth out his harshness, Khrushchev ordered to give dad a piece of land in our state dacha and allowed him to build a house (then it was not allowed). Then we built our current dacha. Dad just came out with two books, they all went to her. We had a summer wooden stable - it was demolished and a new house was built. After that, dad moved to Bakovka. At first, when dad was still in the army and the dacha was state-owned, it looked like a manor. It is now that a settlement has formed here, but then there was no one around. There was only our state dacha - a fence, and twenty-one hectares of land behind it. With a pond, with a stream along the fence, with a stable. Big house, many serving people, they love us, we adore them. In a w

they held on to their places: there used to be a house where they lived, and many of them had no other shelter. In addition, my father helped them than he could ...

Three or four, sometimes five horses were brought to Bakovka every summer. Soldiers came to take care of the horses, officers from the Higher Cavalry School in Khamovniki came. One of them was the country's champion in riding, and once, like the others, his father taught dressage ... He also trained here with his former students. My father did not participate in the races, but he knew the horse, had an approach to it, knew how to train, saw what it was like, and could predict its future from its exterior. Despite the obvious harmlessness, for almost the rest of his life, Budyonny was under the hood of the

"organs". At the June 1957 plenum, when the "anti-party group of Malenkov, Kaganovich and Shepilov who joined them" was smashed, Marshal Zhukov showed the audience documents with materials of observation of a number of marshals of the Soviet Union, a number of senior officials, including Budyonny, Timoshenko, Zhukov, after Konev, after Voroshilov and others, with a recording of overheard conversations in 58 volumes. It can be assumed that if Khrushchev was angry with Budyonny, it was only for his closeness to the disgraced Marshal Zhukov. So, on September 7, 1959, the chairman of the KGB, A. N. Shelepin, reported to Khrushchev: "On August 19 of this year, on the occasion of the death of Lieutenant General Kryukov, the wife of the latter, the famous singer Ruslanova, arranged a commemoration, at which, among others, were the Marshals of the Soviet Union Comrade. Budyonny S. M. and Zhukov G. K. ... Comrade. Zhukov ... declared that if he were the Minister of Defense, he would not allow the Government to adopt a new Decree on pensions for military personnel and their families. He further said that Mr. Malinovsky gave freedom of action to the head of the Main Political Directorate, General of the Army Golikov, and the latter was ruining the army. "In the newspaper Krasnaya Zvezda," Zhukov continued, "every day they publish articles with calls to raise and strengthen the authority

political workers and criticize commanders. As a result of such a policy, the army will be disintegrated."

Zhukov's statements on this issue were supported by Comrade. Budyonny".

As a result, a whole party affair arose. Explanations were demanded from the participants of the commemoration. Marshal Budyonny was brief and military rosary: "On the vols. L. I. Brezhnev and A. I. Kirichenko asked whether I was on August 19 at the funeral and commemoration of General Kryukov together with Marshal Zhukov, where he allegedly spoke in my presence about the collapse of the army, about the unjustified elevation of comrade. Golikov F.I. and belittling Comrade. Malinovsky R.

Ya., as well as on

the pensions of military personnel. I answer. 1. He was not at the funeral of General Kryukov (he was busy at a meeting of the Presidium of the DOSAAF Central Committee). 2. I saw Zhukov for only 5-10 minutes, in the courtyard of Ruslanova's dacha, when in the evening (about 7 o'clock) I went to Ruslanova's with my wife to pay attention to a person in a difficult moment. At this time, those present at the commemoration dispersed.

Among them was

Marshal Zhukov. At this meeting, Marshal Zhukov did not say anything of the kind. The highly experienced Semyon Mikhailovich well mastered one of the main wisdoms of Soviet life - when possible, to answer: he was not, was not a member, did not participate. And do not

name any names, so as not to involve other people (otherwise, you see, they will drown you). It is worth emphasizing that even if Nikita Sergeevich sulked at Semyon Mikhailovich because of his closeness to Zhukov, this did not prevent him from awarding Budyonny with the Golden Star of the Hero of the Soviet Union twice, in 1958 and 1963. So no disgrace Semyon Mikhailovich and this time did not suffer. And the third "Gold Star" in 1968, for the next anniversary, was already granted to him by Brezhnev. On this occasion, Semyon Mikhailovich joked: "When I was a hero, there were no golden stars yet, but now there are golden stars, but what a hero I am now ..." Under Nikita Sergeevich and Leonid Ilyich, Budyonny

Khrushchev, he symbolized the heroism of the Civil War, which, along with the heroism of the Great Patriotic War, they tried to oppose to the dark times of the cult of personality, as well as, to some extent, the return to "Lenin's precepts." After all, Budyonny met with Lenin more than once, and his adjutant A.M. Zolototrubov even wrote the book "Meetings with Ilyich" on his behalf. But this was already in the days of Brezhnev, when the image of Budyonny - the legendary hero of the Civil War and a friend of Lenin - was in demand no less than under Khrushchev. In those years, they generally preferred not to talk about Stalin, and Semyon Mikhailovich was just the best symbol of the permitted part of the Soviet past. Moreover, his rivals, Dumenko and Mironov, although rehabilitated, still remained in the shadows, because, due to their poorly hidden anti-Bolshevism, they were not very suitable for propaganda purposes. Budyonny was appointed to DOSAAF after the post of cavalry commander was abolished in 1954. For some time, Semyon Mikhailovich remained in a purely symbolic post of Deputy Minister of Defense for Special Assignments. But it was clear that after the abolition of the cavalry, there was simply nothing for Semyon Mikhailovich to do in the Soviet army. Therefore, already in 1955 he was transferred to the Central Committee of DOSAAF, made a member of the Presidium. For almost 20 years Budyonny headed the Central Award Commission of this organization, which was called upon to carry out pre-conscription training of young people. By and large, it was a sinecure of pure water, designed to sweeten the resignation. But Semyon Mikhailovich continued to speak at various meetings, as long as his health allowed, he maintained his status as a living legend. After the actual resignation, he took up his memoirs. With the help of A. M. Zolototrubov and other referents, he wrote four volumes of The Path Traveled. Needless to say, only good things are written about Semyon Mikhailovich himself. Unfortunately, the fourth volume, which describes the events from 1934 to 1945, was published only partially - in 1975 in the Don magazine. Maybe it's worth finally releasing Bu



Budyonny's memoirs very quickly became the most popular memories of the Civil War in the USSR. The memoirs of the White Guards after the Second World War were no longer published, and from the Soviet commanders of the Civil War, almost no one left memoirs, because, not without the help of Semyon Mikhailovich, he did not survive 1937 and 1938. So in this field Budyonny was out of competition. His memoirs have become for millions of Soviet readers the same as Zhukov's memoirs in relation to the Great Patriotic War. The history of the two wars was perceived primarily through the works of these generals. The popularity of the marshal was so great that on the street, in the theater, at exhibitions, even in the last years of his life, he was literally not allowed to pass. True, new songs about him were no longer composed. But jokes were told. Here is one of the most famous: "A buyer comes into an antique shop and asks: "Wrap this faience kitty for me. And the seller reproachfully told him: "This is not a kitty, this is Semyon Mikhailovich Budyonny." Well, in the guise of Budyonny with his luxurious mustache, there really was something catlike. And here is another anecdote, from the last lifetime. In 1969, Semyon Mikhailovich learns that there was an attempt on Brezhnev, but unsuccessful. The terrorist fired, but did not hit Brezhnev. Budyonny, with regret: "Oh, I told you, it was necessary to checkered,

checkers."

On the night of December 3, 1969, Marshal Voroshilov died at the age of 89. About "native Klim" Budyonny wrote a heartfelt obituary, which appeared in Pravda on the day of the funeral. Semyon Mikhailovich wrote: "He died like a soldier on duty ... The life of Kliment Efremovich was a wonderful song, and the song, like a feat, is immortal and eternal." On May 30, 1970, at the 16th Congress of the All-Union Leninist Young Communist League, Budyonny presented his award checker to the Komsomol, as if bequeathing the most precious thing. But after that he lived for another three years. It is good that he was surrounded not only by popular love, but also by the most sincere love and care of his relatives and friends. For the last 35 years of his life, Semyon Mikhailovich smiled at family happiness.

I must say that Budyonny was not particularly lucky with his wives.

The first wife, Cossack Nadezhda Ivanovna, spent most of the marriage separated from her husband. She is on the Don, he is in the Far East, and then on the fronts of the First World War. After, in Civil, the couple finally reunited.

Nadezhda Ivanovna served as a nurse in the Budennovsky partisan detachment, then in the cavalry division, the cavalry corps and the First Cavalry. However, there seemed to be no great love between Budyonny and his first wife. And their life together ended in tragedy. In Rostov, after the end of the Civil War, the families of Budyonny and Voroshilov settled in one luxurious mansion. Nadezhda Ivanovna became friends even earlier with Ekaterina Davydovna Voroshilova-Gorbman. Together we went out of town for picnics, often gathered at a common table. Both women went with their husbands throughout the Civil War. Both were good housewives, they knew how to create a cozy life, the blessing that befell the country in 1921, the famine did not touch either Budyonny or Voroshilov. For dinner, you could always get delicacies, expensive wine, fruits. But the relationship between Nadezhda Ivanovna and Semyon Mikhailovich gradually deteriorated, both due to the lack of children (Nadezhda blamed her husband for this), and due to the fact that Budyonny increasingly began to have

affairs on the side. They say that his wife paid him the same coin. After moving to Moscow in 1923, their relationship completely went wrong. In 1924, Budyonny met Olga Stefanovna Mikhailova, his future second wife. Then she was not yet twenty years old. They met in Kislovodsk, in a sanatorium. Later, at the end of the 30s, or more precisely, on January 27, 1938, the wife of Marshal Egorov Galina Antonovna Tseshkovskaya recalled this at the Lubyanka interrogation: "I have known Semyon Mikhailovich since 1920 as a cheerful, pleasant person, while at the same time mind, ambitious and vain, a man of posture and a certain amount of acting. Constantly developing culturally and politically, Budyonny could no longer be satisfied with life with a simple illiterate Cossack woman. The meeting between Olga Stefanovna and Semyon Mikhailovich took place before my very eyes in Kislovodsk. One day

Lermontov rock. Upon arrival there, after a certain period of time, two couples unexpectedly arrived. They were Kulik and Georgadze with two women, one of whom was Olga Stefanovna. Soon I left with Yegorov to my sanatorium, and Budyonny stayed with the new company. The next morning a scene of jealousy broke out with Kulik, who brought Olga Stefanovna for himself. Thus began Budyonny's romance with Olga Stefanovna. The Cossack woman shot herself (obviously, realizing that her husband's new hobby was serious. This happened at the end of November 1924. - **B.S.** ). Literally on the second day after the suicide of the Cossack woman, Olga Stefanovna came to the house of Semyon Mikhailovich. What did she bring to Budyonny's life? Beautiful, young, successful in the field of French, soloist of the Bolshoi Theater. All this pleased and delighted Budyonny. And suddenly, after 12 years of happy family life, the arrest of Olga Stefanovna. I have never seen Semyon Mikhailovich so dead as in our country house. He had tears rolling down his cheeks. I could never imagine that Budyonny could cry. The arrest of Olga Stefanovna, on the one hand, hit his pride, and on the other, made him suffer because of the loss of his beloved woman, because of the loss of an established, familiar family life. We celebrated the New Year together at our dacha. After dinner, Budyonny sat down next to me and asked if I knew about Olga Stefanovna's arrest. I answered in the affirmative and asked what happened, he answered me that they, together with Bubnova, turned out to be spies. The first is a spy of the Polish state, the second is a spy of three states. Olga Stefanovna worked as a spy for seven years, lived with some Pole from the embassy, received 20 thousand for her work. For the first time here I heard from Budyonny that Olga Stefanovna and Bubnova spoke about me during interrogation, as about the leader of a spy group, that I gave them espionage orders. Budyonny warned me to be ready for all sorts of surprises. The fact that Semyon Mikhailovich and Nadezhda Ivanovna have rece

It is quite natural that after the tragic death of Budyonny's wife, ominous rumors spread that a dashing grunt had shot her in order to get rid of family problems in such a radical way. So, the writer Mikhail Bulgakov wrote in his diary on December 13, 1925: "I heard in passing that Budyonny's wife had died. Then the rumor that suicide, and then, it turns out, he killed her. He fell in love, she interfered with him ... She threatened him that she would come out with revelations of his cruelty to soldiers in tsarist times, when he was a sergeant-major. In fact, everything happened in the presence of several witnesses. And this is what happened. On that day, returning home in the dark, Budyonny saw a group of suspicious men in the yard. Just in case, he took the safety off the pistol in his pocket and sent a cartridge into the barrel. Arriving home, Budyonny put the pistol on the table and went to change. At that moment, Nadezhda appeared in the house with several friends. And then an unexpected, absurd incident happened. Nadezhda Budennaya ran up to the table and, laughing, saying something funny to her friends, put the pistol to her temple. At that moment Budyonny returned to the room and shouted that the pistol was loaded. In response, Nadezhda laughed: "I am a fighting man, I know how to handle ..." After that, a shot rang out. At least, this is how Budyonny himself described the circumstances of his wife's death to the investigator. As we remember, there were rumors that before Nadezhda Ivanovna shot herself, there was a public showdown between her and her husband. It is possible that the scandal really was and he provoked suicide. Witnesses of the scandal do not confirm, but they were all friends of Semyon Mikhailovich and, quite possibly, simply did not want to dirty the name of the legendary army commander. In any case, the fact that Nadezhda Ivanovna died in front of several witnesses is beyond doubt. But Budyonny was a cunning, prudent man, and hardly capable of reckless acts. Therefore, he would never kill his wife in front of witnesses. After all, it would certainly cost him his career, and quite possibly his freedom. Of course, from the death of his wife, which hap

after the funeral, he did not grieve for a long time and soon (according to Yegorov's wife, even after a few days) a new mistress appeared in the house - Olga Stefanovna Budnitskaya (stage name - Mikhailova). Six months later they got married. About how the first wife of Budyonny died, his third wife, Maria Vasilievna, also recalled from the words of her husband: "They came from the theater, he sat down on the bed, began to take off his boots. She is at the table, fiddling with a revolver. Playfully put to her forehead: "Look, now I'll pull the trigger!" He told her: "Stop it, stop it. This is not a toy, the safety of the revolver is off. Everything happened in a matter of seconds. Semyon Mikhailovich said that, apparently, she accidentally pulled the trigger.

Daughter Nina left her story about the death of her father's first wife, of course, also from his words: "She accidentally shot herself. This happened in the same house where we live now, in Romanov Lane, on the former Granovsky Street, but in the next entrance. It all happened in 1924 - dad recently settled on Granovsky. His mother and sister lived with him, but they were at the theater that evening. And dad was walking home from a meeting - along Semashko, along Nizhny Kislovsky ... And he sees: some kind of company is clustering in the dark. "Here I am," he told me about it this way, "Walter took his safety off. He came home and put it on the chest of drawers where he always put it. And then he sat down and began to pull off his boots. (They wore boots with talcum powder, and it was a whole thing to take them off.) And the wife went up to the chest of drawers, took a pistol, and put it to her temple. She said: "Look, Sema," and pulled the trigger. And that's all ... Dad said that in civilian life she was in the Cavalry, was in charge of the medical unit ... In the Cavalry she had a revolver. Papa said that she seemed to know how to handle him, but even then: once they were going somewhere on a train, and a bullet flew a centimeter from his temple. She twisted and twisted the revolver in her hands, and then she pulled the trigger. Dad forbade us even to point a child's gun at a person: "What if a real weapon falls into our hands?" But, most likely, it was suicide, although in conversations with relatives, Budyonny kept the version of an accident until the last days. The first wife of Budyonny was buried at the Vagankovsky cemetery. A

wife, Maria Vasilievna, "my husband took my word that as long as I was alive, I would take care of this grave." Perhaps Budyonny also felt his guilt in the death of Nadezhda Ivanovna.

Seven years later, in 1932, Stalin's second wife, Nadezhda Alliluyeva, committed suicide in exactly the same way.

Stalin knew about the tragedy that had taken place in the Budyonny family. Perhaps the same grief that befell both contributed to their rapprochement. They were also united by the suspicion of killing their wives - in both cases, clearly unfair. Nadezhda Ivanovna died in front of many witnesses. They could not all come to an agreement and shield Budyonny. Yes, and in the murder of his wife, Semyon Mikhailovich, if you look, there was no great need. He could well divorce her and marry another. Or even live with a mistress without registering a marriage. After all, then the actual marriage was recognized on a par with the official. And what kind of secrets, unknown to the high party authorities, could the offended wife tell if the brave commander left her for her mistress? That he, being a sergeant-major in the tsarist army, brutally beat the soldiers? So who was interested? Semyon Mikhailovich could also hit his Red Army men, and most often for the cause - if a coward was celebrated or civilians were robbed too much. Could the fact that Budyonny beat someone else in tsarist times really lead to a scandal now, in 1924, and who would fan this scandal? After all, the cult of Budyonny as a hero of the Civil War, a commander from the people, was in its prime. But the fact that Nadezhda Ivanovna, knowing that Semyon Mikhailovich had fallen out of love with her and could go to the young city beauty Olga Stefanovna, decided to commit suicide, is quite likely. And if on that fateful evening there really was no scandal between them and Budyonny's testimony is correct, then the following version of what happened is possible. In order not to harm her husband, whom she still loved, Nadezhda Ivanovna presented suicide as an accident. And, perhaps, the words of Budyonny that the gun was removed from the safety catch served as the

Soon after the wedding, Olga Stefanovna entered the conservatory, and then became a soloist of the Bolshoi Theater. She had a strong, infrequent voice - a contralto. At first, everything was fine with Budyonny's second wife. One problem - there were no children. Olga Stefanovna was not going to turn into a housewife, to mess around with screaming babies. She was worried about a career at the Bolshoi, attracted by social life. It seems that their marriage to Budyonny actually fell apart even before the arrest. By that time, Olga Stefanovna began a serious romance with the tenor of the Bolshoi Theater Alekseev. Budyonny's daughter Nina recalled his second wife, her aunt, in this way: "He married not a singer, but an ordinary girl (they met in a sanatorium). She already entered the conservatory as his wife. And then he explained to her how to sing. He had a very good ear: whatever you put into his hands, he plays on everything. And on the button accordion, and on the accordion, and on the harmonica of the German system, and this is a very complex instrument. In the fifties, even records were sold: dad and his friend from Rostov play, the disc is called "Duet of Bayan Players". So: his second wife, Olga Stefanovna, began to study as a mezzo-soprano, and then her dad told her: "You don't sing with your own voice" - and she retrained as a contralto. Daddy also supervised a little here ... Father and his ladies were not lucky. Then he was an inspector of the Red Army cavalry and spent more than half a year wandering around the military districts. And the young wife in Moscow is alone, and she has a stormy romance with a tenor from the Bolshoi Theater ... Dad was aware that there were enough informers in the Bolshoi. But he did nothing, and why - I do not know. Maybe out of pride, maybe out of love ... And his wife wandered around the embassies without him: she receives an invitation and goes to a reception with the wife of the chief of the General Staff of the Red Army, Marshal Yegorov. She led a secular life and on this, poor thing, she got burned: she was credited with a connection with foreigners. When she was arrested, dad was not in Moscow: otherwise they said that he himself took her to the "check" ... But this is nonsense. He went to Stalin to fight her off. He recorded thi

- You have a bad

wife! "And this is not a political matter, but a family one. Stalin sent him to Yezhov, and he said that Olga Stefanovna was taken only to find out about Yegorov's wife, and then, they say, they would let her go. She, of course, feels sorry for her. She spent several years in solitary confinement, she was raped ... Then Olga Stefanovna lived in a settlement in Siberia, and in total she was sent to prisons and exile for 19 years: from 1937 to 1953. In the settlement, she worked as a cleaner at a school, and she was treated very badly there: the locals believed that she was arrested because she wanted to poison Budyonny. Her father followed her fate and, as soon as it became possible, took her out of there, knocked out a room, supported her financially ... But she did not live long. Olga Stefanovna returned to Moscow in 1956. Semyon Mikhailovich placed her in a hospital, helped her get an apartment. After the arrest of his wife, the marshal brought her mother to him. Her niece, Maria Vasilievna, Olga Stefanovna's cousin, a student at the Moscow Medical Institute, came to visit her. She gave injections to Budyonny like a nurse. Marshall loved her. Varvara Ivanovna, mother of Olga Stefanovna, betrothed them. Here is what Maria Vasilievna recalled: "I arrived in Moscow in 1936 from Kursk. Entered to study at the Dental Institute on Kalyaevskaya. Lived in a hostel. I had a relative in Moscow, Varvara Ivanovna, my father's sister. I called her as soon as I arrived. She called to her - exactly set the time. Of course, I knew that her daughter, my cousin Olga, had married a big man. For the famous Budyonny, whom the whole country knows ... When I went to their house, I was very worried about how it would be there. Varvara Ivanovna received me well. I started visiting her. She rarely saw Olga, she disappeared about her business, but she never saw Semyon Mikhailovich. One day she came, rang the doorbell - he was on the threshold. Like a photo in a newspaper came off. - Who are you to? - speaks. I was timid: - To Varvara I



- No need. I know how to go to her room. – Do you know? So this is not your first time here? - I often visit ... When

his wife was imprisoned in 1937, Varvara Ivanovna asked me to come sometimes to help her with the household. Helping my aunt, I began to see Semyon Mikhailovich often. I helped cook. When, in the afternoon, Semyon Mikhailovich came to dine, she served it to him. He was grateful and always smiled. One day my aunt, Varvara Ivanovna, asks me: - Do you have company? "Yes," I say.

- Is there anyone seriously?

- No. She must have prepared me. And I told him that I

don't have  
groom.

The next day, Semyon Mikhailovich asks me at dinner: - How do you feel

about me? Suspecting nothing, I answer: - You are my favorite hero.

- Will you marry me? I was in a hurry. She was silent for a long time. And I say: - I'm afraid. He laughed: - Go to your

parents, consult. And give me an answer. He left - I'm to my aunt.

She says, "Come out." He is a very good person. This I know. He will marry someone anyway. Even if Olga gets out of prison, they won't be together. How is this possible: Budyonny's wife was sitting?! Come out. And I went to Kursk to consult.

Mother opens the door, she didn't wait, she was frightened: - Were you expelled from the institute? - No, I'm getting married. Mother sat on a chair: - For whom? - For Semyon

Mikhailovich. And they in

Kursk did not even know that Olga was in prison. Did you do something in their house? - A mother has a thousand thoughts at once, one worse than the other.

I didn't answer anything, I gave her a letter from Varvara Ivanovna. She wrote that Olga had been imprisoned and that Semyon Mikhailovich wants to marry me...

For a long time my parents and I sat, talked and decided. I'm leaving back to Moscow, my mother hugs me and cries. Maybe, he says, the last time we see each other. Now, go, you won't come. You will be behind seven castles. I returned to

Moscow, came to Budyonny's apartment, I serve him soup at dinner, he said hello and is silent, does not say anything about his proposal. I somehow feel uncomfortable. I had lunch and asked: - Well, what did you decide?

"Positive," I say, and my ears are red with shame. He, too, flushed all over: "I was afraid to ask. Suddenly refuse! And he went to work. In the evening he returned, and I was about to leave. By that time, I was no longer living in a hostel. Varvara Ivanovna arranged for me at Samoteka, rented a corner from a woman who came to Budyonny to do general cleaning. Semyon Mikhailovich says: - Stay in the house. Nothing to run on your own. You are the hostess here now. From embarrassment, at first he said "you", then "you" to me. And I

generally called him "Semyon Mikhailovich" and "you" for a long time. He was angry: - I am your husband, and Semyon Mikhailovich is sitting on a horse. He and

I got along very well and friendly. He was so happy that children were born. He did not have children with those wives, and he thought - this is the reason. On August 13, 1938, Seryozha was born. Ninochka was born on September 6, 1939. I dropped out of college. It was very sad to leave. And Semyon Mikhailovich regretted it, but he did not want to give the children to the nannies either. - You already bring up the guys, and I will pay you a scholarship, - Semyon Mikhailovich told me. Our third son, Misha, was born in 1944.

Varvara Ivanovna lived with us for some time, and then she left for Leningrad to live with her sister. Semyon Mikhailovich helped her get an apartment there. It was a difficult feeling: her daughter - the wife of Semyon Mikhailovich - is in prison, she herself married me to him, our happiness is passing before her eyes, do you understand? It seems that Varvara Ivanovna looked after Semyon Mikhailovich a new young wife immediately after her daughter's arrest. She very accurately psychologically calculated that Budyonny, after the arrest of his wife, would instinctively be afraid of being left without a woman for a long time, and for two reasons. The first is political. If Budyonny remains alone for a long time without having a wife or mistress, Stalin may suspect that the marshal continues to love Olga Stefanovna and is waiting for her to return from the camp (and it would take 19 long years to wait). So, he must certainly harbor a grudge against him, Stalin, because he knows perfectly well that his wife, the wife of a marshal and a national hero, could neither be arrested nor imprisoned without Stalin's sanction. And this circumstance automatically made Budyonny, from the point of view of Joseph Vissarionovich, politically unreliable. The second reason was purely domestic properties. Semyon Mikhailovich wanted family comfort, a well-established life, which the first two wives could not provide for him. And the already middle-aged marshal really wanted children. Varvara Ivanovna also had her own undoubted interest. She probably feared that after the arrest of her daughter, she could at least be evicted from Moscow as a member of the family of an enemy of the people. Since Budyonny could not protect his wife, he will not be able to protect his mother-in-law. And if he marries a niece who is only 20 years old and who cannot be suspected of any

suspicious relationships with all the desire, then no one will touch her own aunt. It is significant that the aunt invited her niece to help them with the housework after her daughter was arrested. Prior to this, Maria Vasilyevna had seen Semyon Mikhailovich only once, although she had visited her aunt more than once, who lived in Budyonnovsk's apartment. And after the disappearance of Olga Stefanovna, if desir

novice student from Kursk. Varvara Ivanovna, quite frankly, wooed the marshal's niece. And he was not against it at all: young, beautiful, she was not noticed in relations with foreigners and tenors of the Bolshoi

Theater. It is unlikely that he immediately had some kind of love for Maria Vasilievna. Already too businesslike, Semyon Mikhailovich offered his hand and heart to his chosen one, and right away, right off the bat, and without saying a word about his personal life with her, only learning from his former mother-in-law that she seemed to have no gentleman. Probably, Varvara Ivanovna, in order to prevent her niece from having suitors, settled her with the marshal's housekeeper so that Maria would be under supervision. Although, of course, Budyonny was really worried that the girl might refuse him, the old man, and this would be a very painful blow to pride. And here is what their daughter Nina told about Budyonny's acquaintance with his third wife: "Olga Stefanovna's mother, her mother's aunt, married her to him. Mom came to Moscow to study at the medical institute as a dentist.

And she rented a corner in a communal apartment: at the hostess, behind a curtain ... Here, on Granovsky Street, she came to her cousin, but she didn't see her dad - she was very shy of him. And then, when Olga Stefanovna was no longer in the house, the aunt said: "Let me introduce you to Semyon Mikhailovich. He is such a good person, so wonderful! After

all, even if Olga is released, what kind of wife is she to him after everything that happened? "Well, she introduced me. And my mother was pretty ... She began to come to her aunt to help clean up, cook something. And just like that, little by little ... Love was very big - they adored each other like crazy. There is probably some, quite understandable, exaggeration here. In fact, as Maria Vasilievna herself

admits, from the very beginning there was no great love between them. She showed up later. Stalin, when he ordered the arrest of Budyonny's wife, used a method of ensuring loyalty to his person, tested not on

the future Marshal G.I. Kulik, the wife of the head of Stalin's personal secretariat A.N. Poskrebyshev (these women were shot), the wife of the "all-Union headman" M.I. two were lucky - got off with prison, camp and exile). At the same time, the husbands of the arrested remained at their posts, even received a promotion. Kulik, for example, became a marshal, however, he was later demoted and, in the end, already in 1950, he was shot. Molotov remained in the Politburo, Kalinin at the head of the Supreme Soviet, and Poskrebyshev was Stalin's first assistant almost to the very end. But if Iosif Vissarionovich wanted to get rid of an objectionable dignitary, it was always possible to get evidence from his wife against her husband about another conspiracy. Stalin hung marshals and party functionaries on a hook, they were aware of this and did not flutter. On this occasion, Khrushchev wrote in his memoirs:

"The Academy is a forge of personnel (Nikita Sergeevich was elected secretary of the party committee of the Industrial Academy in 1930. - **B.S.** ), as they said then, so I was often called to the Central Committee to Yezhov, and I always found understanding in him. He was a simple man, a St. Petersburg worker, and then it was of great importance - a worker, and even a St. Petersburg worker. But at the end of his activity, at the end of his life, it was already a completely different Yezhov. I think it affected him so much that he knew what was going on. He understood that Stalin was using him as a club to destroy cadres, above all the old Bolshevik cadres, and poured vodka into his conscience. Later I was told the following. At the last stage of his life and work, his wife fell ill. She went to the Kremlin hospital, but it was already decided that as soon as she recovered, she would be arrested. Stalin widely used this method of arrest. Through the wives of responsible workers, he tried to uncover "conspiracies", to reveal the "betrayal" of their husbands - responsible workers. After all, wives should know their secrets and be able to help the state, expose the enemies of the people. So the wives of Mikhail Ivanovich Kalinin, Kulik,

Budyonny, and later Molotov's wife Zhemchuzhina. I don't even know how many there were, like that; probably a huge number of innocent women who suffered for the innocence of their husbands. All of them were shot or exiled." We add that Evgenia Yezhova-Khayutina did not wait for the arrest and poisoned herself in the hospital

with sleeping pills. From Olga Stefanovna in custody, without much difficulty, they obtained evidence against Budyonny. Obviously, she was not beaten - one psychological pressure was enough.

On March 14, 1938, Budyonny's wife wrote her own testimony: "She was born in 1905. Father - a peasant, an orphan, ended up in the city, served thirty-six years on the railroad. She began to study in Kursk in 1915. I have very painful memories of the tsarist regime, as my father sent me to the gymnasium. Incorrect speech, cheap dresses, all clothes, as well as the title of a peasant woman, caused ridicule among fellow students. Classy ladies did not allow the children of wealthy parents and dignitaries to play with me at breaks and without hesitation told them in front of me that they had nothing in common with me. "Is your

dad a man?" they asked me. In order to avoid ridicule, in 1915 my father was assigned to the city philistines. I graduated from school in 1920 in Vyazma and immediately married the commandant of the station, Vyazma Runov. She experienced the years of war communism, the devastation, resignedly, but without much enthusiasm: what should happen is happening, the Germans and generals are betraying on the fronts, which means that the tsar is no good, and most importantly, that now no one will call a peasant. This satisfied me quite well, although I was hungry. In 1924, I divorced Runov, he was an alcoholic, drank away his and my salary, and also stole from my meager wardrobe. In 1924, having received a two-week vacation, I went to see Essentuki, because I had no idea what a resort was. Here Kulik, Tyutkin and Georgadze introduced me to S. M. Budyonny. I did not achieve this acquaintance, because I knew Semyon Mikhailovich only from Marshal Budyonny (in 1924 Budyonny was not yet a marshal. - **B.S.**) ... Ovdov, Semyon Mikhailovich suggested that I get in touch, to

During this period, Frunze died and Voroshilov was appointed People's Commissar. At first, at the tables, toasts were raised to the leader of the First Cavalry Budyonny, then toasts began to rise to the leaders of the First Cavalry Budyonny and Voroshilov. In recent years, the horsemen have already boldly raised a glass to the creator of the First Cavalry and to the leader of the Red Army, Voroshilov. For the health of Stalin - a man of the era, the leader of the world proletariat - toasts were always raised with enthusiasm. During the period of a particularly acute and already completely open struggle with the opposition of Trotsky, the cavalry, after consulting with Semyon Mikhailovich, united together and decided to support

Joseph Vissarionovich. My personal relationship with Semyon Mikhailovich was as follows: at the beginning of my acquaintance, I fell in love with him for his kindness. Despite the fact that he loved me very much, he made me feel that I am a small person, which is absolutely true, I have no merit and I use material benefits provided to me without right, that he uses the cars and rest houses of the Central Executive Committee, because deserved, and what do I have to do with it, that my role is to look after and take care of his health and good mood, which, of course, is correct, he said that I should earn fame for myself ... "In some ways, Olga Stefanovna in her testimony, no doubt, cunning. If she really was born in 1905, then it turns out that she married commandant Runov ... at the age of fifteen, which looks unlikely. Most likely, Olga Stefanovna was born two or three, or even four years earlier. Such a shift in the date of birth could be necessary in order to hide the fact of graduating from the gymnasium back in tsarist times. This circumstance usually indicated the more or less prosperous position of the parents and undermined the version of a peasant origin, so valued in Soviet questionnaires. In fact, Olga's father (then still Budnitskaya) could have been a fairly high-ranking railway official, which after 1917 was not worth advertising at all, and even more so during interrogation by the NKVD. And what is characteristic, she

vanity, arrogance and regret that they no longer drink for him as the creator of the First Cavalry, cannot be sewn into the case.

In a later letter to People's Commissar of Internal Affairs Yezhov, Olga Stefanovna wrote about more serious things: "I lived with Budyonny for twelve years and got used to seeing him as a cruel person who stops at nothing to achieve his goals. For twelve years, I experienced many beatings, tyranny, threats, etc. Semyon Mikhailovich threatened to kill me, extradite the GPU as a spy. The investigation demanded that I tell everything that I know about the criminal plans of anyone against the Soviet government. I didn't say anything, because first of all I had to tell about Budyonny, whose revenge I continued to fear. Over the twelve years of my life together with Budyonny, I have accumulated many facts indicating that he did some kind of bad work against the leaders of our country, and primarily against Stalin and Voroshilov, and I want to report these facts in

this statement."

However, there were not so many facts, and all of them were somehow non-specific. For example, shortly after their marriage, Budyonny allegedly expressed resentment that not him, but Voroshilov, was appointed People's Commissar of Defense after Frunze's death. There are such statements in Olga

Stefanovna's letter: "During the period of acute struggle with Trotsky, I asked Semyon Mikhailovich who we would follow, Stalin or Trotsky. Semyon Mikhailovich said that this was a sensitive issue, one cannot rush headlong into extremes here, one must wait a bit to see how events unfold further, then we will resolve the issue ... Semyon Mikhailovich had dark ties on the Don. We were returning from the resort. In Vladikavkaz, a railroad worker greeted him, and then, in a compartment with a bottle of wine, this railroad worker told for a long time how he surrounded the Reds with his detachment, how he strangled a partisan detachment by the throat, that he had a death grip, he was barely pulled away from the corpse of the commander ... Semyon Mikhailovich always kept apart from Tukhachevsky, Yakir, Uborevich and Kork, but at the end of 1936



or at the beginning of 1937, Semyon Mikhailovich was at Tukhachevsky's dacha, said that they had concluded a business agreement between themselves, would help each other in everything and would not quarrel - in a word, friendship to the grave. Indeed, the attitude of Semyon Mikhailovich towards Tukhachevsky, Yakir and Uborevich has changed. Semyon Mikhailovich and Yegorov often visited Tukhachevsky at the dacha, which was striking. I know that Semyon Mikhailovich instructed his friends Apanasenko and Serdich to improve relations with Uborevich. As for tyranny and beatings on the part of Budyonny, the testimony of Olga Stefanovna is similar to the truth. Semyon Mikhailovich's blow was delivered professionally, since tsarist times; he knew how to hit so as not to cripple. Moreover, Olga Stefanovna gave many reasons for beating. Her tricks with Alekseev and other bohemian lovers did not cause delight in Budyonny, to put it mildly, and he could well carefully educate his missus, so that there were no marks on her face and Olga Stefanovna could still sing at the Bolshoi. Many memoirists also wrote about Budyonny's tyranny, for example, the same journalist Mikhail Solovyov, who in the 30s was someone like a speechwriter for the famous

army commander. But the political evidence did not pull anything serious. Go and remember some nameless railroad worker and prove that he talked about the fight against the Red partisans, and, for example, not against the Makhnovists. Yes, and the story turns out to be some kind of confused: either the railwayman strangled the partisan detachment, or only its commander. As for Budyonny's visits to Tukhachevsky's dacha, if Olga Stefanovna had not only invented them under the dictation of the investigator, then they could well have been done on Stalin's instructions in order to lull the vigilance of Mikhail Nikolayevich and his comrades. After all, just at the end of the 36th, Stalin decided to liquidate them soon. In addition, on business matters, Budyonny and other "cavalrymen" still had to communicate with people from the Tukhachevsky

official contacts could always be passed off as preparing a

conspiracy. As for the confrontation between Stalin and Trotsky, Semyon Mikhailovich could not be on the side of the latter, and Stalin knew this. After all, Budyonny challenged Trotsky's priority in organizing large cavalry formations. And Lev Davydovich was well aware of the closeness of Voroshilov and Budyonny to Stalin, he never counted on their support and did not apply for it. And here is what the intra-chamber "hen" K. told in her report dated July 14, 1938: "Together with me, the actress of the Bolshoi Theater Olga Mikhailova, Budyonny's ex-wife, is sitting in the cell. According to her, Budyonny not only knew, but was also a participant in the anti-Stalin, anti-Soviet military conspiracy. Mikhailova says that it occurred to her to inform on him, but she did not know who to turn to, she thought Voroshilov would not believe and would tell the same Budyonny about it. When the arrests and the defeat of the military cadres of the conspirators began, Budyonny was very afraid for himself and was waiting for his arrest. During the plenum of the Central Committee of 1937, he also went about not himself ... She said that it was now clear to her that during a trip to Siberia in 1929-1930, Budyonny, under the guise of tea drinking with old partisans, organized insurgent detachments ... Mikhailova is inclined to believe that Budyonny wanted remove her and compromise her politically, knowing about her connection with the artist Alekseev, he was afraid

that by going to him and getting out of his influence, knowing about a number of his anti-Soviet sentiments, she could harm him. As far as I understood, Mikhailova hid all the facts from the investigation, since, according to her, she was in an interrogation in a semi-insane state, secondly, they hardly asked her about Budyonny, thirdly, she was afraid to talk about him, fourthly, she only now began to understand and evaluate a lot, and, finally, fifthly, she was waiting for a fair reproach, why she did not report it in a timely manner. Mikhailova

is now in a state of severe depression, and it is very difficult to talk with her, you do not always call for frankness. It must be said that after the arrest,

seems to have been observed in the wild. Therefore, what she said to the mother hen could be the result of an obsessive delirium that arose under the influence of what the investigators asked her during interrogation. It is impossible today to determine which of what Olga Stefanovna told during interrogations and in conversations in the cell corresponds to the truth, and which is the fruit of a painful fantasy or simply dictated by the investigators. Upon returning from prison, Budyonny's second wife told her third wife and her cousin that she was beaten and tortured in prison during the investigation, claiming that Budyonny was also arrested and exposed by many testimonies. It is possible that all this is the fruit of a sick imagination. In the state in which she was imprisoned, the investigators could force her to give the testimony they needed without torture. During interrogations, Budyonny's wife was also asked about visiting foreign embassies. Olga Stefanovna honestly admitted that she sometimes went there without Budyonny and sang for the Italian ambassador Attolico. She also recalled that "at one of the receptions at the Latvian embassy, one of the retinue of Munters (Ambassador of Latvia. - **B.S.**) asked me why Radek had not been shot, to which I replied: it means that he will still be needed. The Japanese embassy asked where Budyonny was, and reported that he was rumored to be in the Far East, preparing a war against Japan. They asked why I serve, I always answered, whoever does not work here does not eat, and I love art. Foreigners hinted that they wanted to see our dacha, I replied that it was being renovated. They asked for a phone number, I answered that the phone does not work for us. They asked if I liked Karlsbad, answered that the waters are strong there, but the treatment is very expensive." Regarding her connection with the singer Alekseev, Olga Stefanovna said that Budyonny threatened his opponent with prison, to which the supposedly frightened tenor "made an offer that he himself would go to the NKVD authorities and declare something light on me, for which they would give me three years in camps, he will accumulate more

The fact that Budyonny could threaten Alekseev with prison is quite possible. The idea of "something easy" was probably born to Olga Stefanovna already in prison, under the influence of a mental

disorder. Alexander Ivanovich Alekseev himself, one of the best Lenskys in the history of Russian opera, was also interrogated as a witness. He argued: "Yes, we had conversations on issues of current politics, in them she always behaved positively, I never noticed any bad moods. - What did

Mikhailova tell you about her relationship with Budyonny? - She said that

she had established a strained relationship with him on the basis of jealousy. - Did

you want to convey something light to Mikhailova in the NKVD?

"I categorically deny such a conversation with Mikhailova." In the latter case, I think Alexander Ivanovich was not disingenuous.

In general, he answered questions very competently. Try to admit that Mikhailova said something wrong about the policy of the party and government in his presence, and the investigation will immediately have bad questions: why did you keep up such a conversation and why didn't you immediately report it? And then it is quite possible to thunder

on the Lubyanka in a completely different capacity. On August 3, 1939, investigator Kurkova issued a decision to dismiss the case and release O. S. Mikhailova from custody, since "there is no evidence to bring the accused Mikhailova to trial." In a report to the authorities, Kurkova noted: "Mikhailova is in a very serious, painful condition. She needs to be

treated." At that time, Yezhov had already been removed from his post by the NKVD. Beria, who replaced him, released some of those who had already been arrested, but had not yet been convicted. The so-called "Beria thaw" began, in which Kurkova tried to free Budyonny's wife. However, Beria did not release Mikhailova. Obviously, he did not make this decision on his own, but after consulting with Stalin. Probably, Iosif Vissarionovich decided that it would be more useful to have Budyonny's wife at hand, just in case, in the camp, if you suddenly need to do s

in November 1939, Mikhailova's case was transferred to the Special meeting.

The indictment stated: "Oh. S. Mikhailov, being the wife of Marshal of the Soviet Union Budyonny since 1924 (most likely, this is a mistake, since they got married only in 1925. And Budyonny himself, in a letter of 1955, which we will quote below, refers their marriage to 1925. - **B.S.** ), discredited the latter with her connections with foreigners and behavior, namely: 1. Being the wife of Budyonny, at the same time she had an intimate relationship

with the artist of the Bolshoi Theater Alekseev, who was being developed on suspicion of espionage (died) (Alexander Ivanovich died in 1939 on will, from throat cancer and was buried at the prestigious Novodevichy Cemetery. - **B.S.** ). 2. Being on treatment in Czechoslovakia, she rotated among the enemies of the people, spies and conspirators Yegorov and his wife, Aleksandrov and Tumanov. In addition, it was established that Mikhailova, along with official visits to

foreign embassies, had unofficial, at the personal invitation of ambassadors, supplied the Italian ambassador with tickets to her concerts and repeatedly received gifts from him. Arrested for espionage, the wife of the former 1st deputy. People's Commissar of Defense Yegorov and the wife of the former

People's Commissar of Education Bubnov in their testimony characterize Mikhailova as a woman of their circle who did the same thing as they did. Mikhailova pleaded guilty to having suspicious connections and unofficial visits to embassies. Spy activity denies. On the basis of the foregoing, the "case" on the charge of Mikhailova should be sent to the Special Conference for consideration.

November 1939". Treason to her husband, since he was a marshal, was interpreted approximately as treason to the homeland, and visits to foreign embassies and communication

with the wives of the executed enemies of the people Egorov and Bubnov were drawn to suspicion of espionage. On November 18, 1939, the Special Meeting sentenced O. S. Mikhailova to eight years in labor camps.

On August 15, 1945, her term of imprisonment expired, but for another three years the unfortunate, sick woman was kept in prison as a "socially dangerous element." Olga Stefanovna was accused of anti-Soviet sentiments and "slandorous fabrications" against "the head of the Soviet government and the political system existing in the country." She was released only in April 1948 and sent into exile in the regional center of Yeniseisk, Krasnoyarsk Territory. Another unknown exile left memories of her stay there in the rehabilitation case: "She works as a cleaner at high school 45. In trying to talk to her, I discovered her painful aloofness, intimidation, fear of meeting anyone and a clear confusion in her memories, even in the logic of speech. She limited herself to short remarks that she was not guilty, she was convicted as the wife of a marshal, a sword was broken over her head, she herself conducted an investigation in the NKVD, Semyon Mikhailovich was very ill, did not accept anyone, since he was ninety-four years old. Mikhailova could hardly have left Yeniseisk alone if she had been released." When, after Stalin's death, the opportunity arose to intercede for his imprisoned relatives, Semyon Mikhailovich, to his credit, took advantage of this opportunity. On July 23, 1955, Budyonny wrote to the Chief Military Prosecutor's Office regarding the rehabilitation of his second wife: "In the first months of 1937, I.V. Stalin, in a conversation with me, said that, as he knew from Yezhov's information, my wife Budyonny-Mikhailova Olga Stefanovna behaves indecently and compromises me, and that, he stressed, this is not profitable for us in any way, and we will not allow this to anyone. If Yezhov's information is correct, then, says I. V. Stalin, foreigners have dragged it in or can drag it into their networks. Comrade Stalin recommended that I talk in detail about this with Yezhov. Soon I had a meeting with Yezhov, who in a conversation told me that my wife, together with Bubnova and Egorova, went to foreign embassies - Italian, Japanese, Polish, and they stayed at the dacha of the Japanese embassy until 3 o'clock

night. Then Yezhov said that she had an intimate relationship with the artist of the Bolshoi Theater Alekseev.

The fact that his wife and her friends were in the Italian embassy, more precisely, with the wife of the ambassador in the company of women and sang for them, she herself told me before my conversation with Yezhov, admitting that she did not expect such consequences. To my question to Yezhov, what is concrete in terms of political compromising is there on it, he replied - nothing more so far, we will continue to monitor her, and you do not talk to her about this topic. In July 1937, at

Yezhov's request, I called on him again. This time he said that his wife, when she was at the Italian embassy, had a program of horse racing and running at the hippodrome. To this I answered, well, so what of it, because such programs are freely sold and do not represent any value. I think, then Yezhov said, that she should be arrested and, during interrogations, find out the nature of her connections with foreign embassies, through her find out everything about Yegorova and Bubnova, and if it turns out that she is not guilty, then you can release. I told Yezhov that I see no grounds for arresting my wife, since I have not been given evidence of her political crimes. As for her intimate ties with the artist Alekseev (which I had information about apart

from Yezhov and the Ministry of Internal Affairs), then, I told Yezhov, this is a matter of a purely domestic, not political order, and I think maybe I should divorce her. In August 1937, when I was not in Moscow (I was leaving for ten days in the Gorohovets camps), Olga Stefanovna was arrested. Personally, I did not show initiative in her arrest, moreover, I was against it, since from what I knew from

Yezhov, I did not see any grounds for this. Dagin, an employee of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (I knew him personally from work in Rostov), did not invite me to talk to him

did not have a wife.

Subsequently, after the arrest of a number of directors of stud farms - Alexandrov, Chumakov, Tarasenko, Davidovich and others, as well as the arrest of his wife, I came to the conclusion that Yezhov did all this with

with the aim of obtaining, through intrigue and provocation, evidence against me before our party and state, and to deal with me. I consider it necessary to give at least a brief description of Olga Stefanovna. She is the daughter of a railway worker, who later became a railway employee, their family is poor. He married her in 1925.

After her marriage, she entered the Moscow Conservatory and graduated in 1930. She studied diligently, actively conducted social work. There was never a hint that she showed any dissatisfaction with the Soviet regime. In material terms, her needs were modest, she never showed greed in these matters. In conclusion, I must say - I do not believe that she could commit a crime against Soviet power. Meanwhile, Semyon Mikhailovich found family happiness with Maria Vasilievna. Not only did they truly love each other, the marshal finally had children. Once Budyonny told his wife: "Thank you, Maria, you extended my life, created a family. I want to go home after work. All my life I dreamed of messing around with children. But Semyon Mikhailovich did not forget his former wife either. He helped Olga Stefanovna as best he could.

After returning from the settlement, he placed her in the Kremlin hospital (she had a progressive mental disorder), secured an apartment for her, and bought all the furnishings. And here is what Budyonny wrote to his third wife from the front on September 19, 1941: "Hello, my dear mother! I received your letter and remembered September 20, which bound us for life. It seems to me that you and I have grown up together since childhood and live to this day. I love you infinitely and until the end of my last heartbeat I will love you. You are my most beloved creature in life, you, who brought happiness, are our own children. I think that everything will end well and we will be together again ... Hello to you, my dear, I kiss you tightly, your Semyon.



Budyonny did not write such letters to his other wives. Although Budyonny was much older than his third wife, but, according to his daughter Nina, "daddy was very brave, and they lived in perfect harmony. He felt good with his mother ... But he didn't take her anywhere for a long time ... He was afraid for her: it's better not to catch the leader's eyes, you never know what he will think up. But then he nevertheless took her to some kind of reception, and Stalin came up, drank for them ... After that, dad began to take mom everywhere. Maria Vasilievna herself testifies to the same: "We lived with him soul to soul from the first day to the last. They never quarreled. He did not have a soul in children. The most favorite activity for children was: in the morning or in the evening to get into his bed, lie down, flounder. Usually he started to tell something and interrupted, asked them to continue the story - who knows how. I haven't worked since. True, she graduated from many different courses: English courses, beekeeping, and gardening. And I learned to embroider on a sewing machine. She mastered all household chores.

He always hid me from the Kremlin society. I was afraid to lose. Sometimes he said: "How were you not afraid to marry me, I was so unlucky: one wife shot herself, the other went to prison village."

We also changed the apartment so that there would be no reminders of the past for him ... He had no energy, passion, love of life. He got off his horse only at the age of 85." It is worth noting that all the women in the Budyonny family knew how to ride a horse and shoot a revolver. This is not surprising. Budyonny's daughter Nina recalled that her father put her on a horse for the first time at the age of four. And from the age of six she was already sitting firmly in the saddle. And Semyon Mikhailovich taught children fencing. According to Nina, "We all three fenced. My father was perfect with weapons - he didn't have a single saber wound, because he knew how to repel an attack. His son Mikhail also excelled in fencing, became the champion of Moscow. Semyon Mikhailovich, according to his widow, smoked Kazbek. He drank very moderately. I think it is true that this moderation referred to the last decades of life, when health was already

did not allow drinking according to the "cavalry standards". As we have already seen, the memoirists, though not very friendly towards Semyon Mikhailovich, as well as the second wife and several arrested friends in the dungeons of the NKVD, claimed that in the 20s and 30s Budyonny loved to drink and take a walk. According to the third wife of the marshal, contrary to popular belief, Semyon Mikhailovich was a very educated person. He graduated from the Academy not for show, but for real, knew three foreign languages, read a lot, collected a unique library of ten thousand books. It is difficult to say how true this is. In any case, this education somehow does not show through in his speeches and memoirs. Perhaps because they were written by referents, foreign languages are not

who knew...

According to Maria Vasilievna, Budyonny sat on a horse only in uniform. And he didn't take off his marshal trousers with stripes even at home, remaining in a pajama jacket. He had only one civilian suit, made by Kremlin tailors for a visit to Turkey. The marshal put on this suit only when he went to the theater. Only then did he sometimes manage to remain unrecognized. Budyonny was lucky in all games. He beat all partners in cards, checkers and billiards. Until old age, he loved to play the accordion. He also had another, somewhat unexpected passion - dancing. Once in the 30s, during the visit of the Soviet military delegation to Turkey, the Turks demonstrated national dances, and then invited the guests to demonstrate their dances. And only one Budyonny was able to adequately answer, famously dancing Russian. After that, dance lessons were introduced in Soviet military schools. The last horse of Budyonny was a stallion of the Budyonny breed named Sophist. It was presented to Semyon Mikhailovich shortly after the war: "The horse felt the approach of Budyonny, when he was still walking around the yard: not seeing the owner, the horse spun its ears, neighed happily. Semyon Mikhailovich approached his pet as if he were a person, whispering something tender in his ear, and the latter, resting his head on his master's shoulder, listened to him. Gently stroking the horse's head and neck, Semyon Mikhailovich treated him to breadcrumbs or

carrot. The horse, gently burying his nose in the master's hand, froze, slightly squinting his eye. Then he obediently and clearly followed the commands, gave alternate legs, knelt down, followed his master, like a child after his mother, "said one of Budyonny's acquaintances. For the last time in his life, Semyon Mikhailovich mounted a saddle at the age of 87 precisely on the Sophist. The horse lived for 33 years, outliving its owner by five years. After the death of Budyonny, Sophist lived in the stable of the Moscow Stud Farm, where he died in 1978. The image of Budyonny's favorite horse is immortalized in the monument to M. I. Kutuzov, installed in Moscow in front of the Borodino Battle panorama museum - the Sophist served as a model for

the sculptor N. V. Tmsky. Daughter Nina recalled: "When dad died, the Sophist cried. At the stud farm, they said that he stood in his stall and tears flowed from him. There is nothing surprising here - horses are telepaths. She also testifies that the marshal was a caring father, but did not interfere in the personal lives of the grown-up children, calmly accepting, in particular, her marriage to the popular artist Mikhail Derzhavin. Nina

Semyonovna recalled: "I didn't take my gentlemen and suitors home, and in the company I only had friends. If someone came to me, I did not show their parents. I knew that this was all passing and of little

interest ... Misha was the only one whom I immediately brought into the house (well, not immediately - after some time). And when I introduced the young man to my parents, they immediately realized that

this was not

just. Then I say to my mother: - Well,

how do you like it? - How could he not like it? He was of utter beauty - you can't stop looking at it. Everyone fell. And you yourself know what kind of

character he has - the sweetest person. How could he not like it?.. Dad accepted him immediately. At first, there were

difficulties with my mother - I started to go out late on dates. I was supposed to be

we met after the show. But I explained: a person has such a profession. And then when will we meet? .. I don't know if I would have decided on a divorce if dad were alive: in recent years he lived only with his grandchildren. This is how I remember him: winter, Bakovka, and he drags sledges in an old marshal's overcoat, my daughter Masha sits in the sleigh. This is my Budyonny. Mikhail Derzhavin also told interviewers about his marriage to Nina Budyonna: "Yulya Khrushcheva introduced us (she was the daughter of Leonid, the son of Nikita Sergeevich Khrushchev), we are still friends with her and call back. She came to Lenkom, where I worked then, and said: "Mishka, you need to meet one charming girl." And at that moment I broke up with Katenka Raikin and was somehow out of work. Julia introduced me to her classmate. Ninochka. Nina Semyonovna Budenny. And then the moment came when it was necessary to get acquainted with the future father-in-law. Before meeting with Budyonny, Derzhavin was very worried, but, in his words, "Ninochka correctly introduced me. He says: "Dad, this is Misha Derzhavin. He comes from an acting family, his dad is an artist of the Vakhtangov Theater, he played the main role in your favorite film "The Artamonov Case"". Semyon Mikhailovich looked at me carefully and said: "Well, come on in, son." I was very surprised, and then I realized that he often called young people that. And I got used to Semyon Mikhailovich and his friends. He liked to joke. I remember Efros asked me: "Misha, what do you think, Budyonny read War and Peace?" Budyonny's death was sudden. Luckily, he didn't suffer for long. On the morning of October 20, 1973, Semyon Mikhailovich complained to his wife about a severe headache. The doctors who arrived at the call could not help, the next day Budyonny's health worsened, he lost consciousness. By the evening of October 26, 1973, Semyon Mikhailovich Budyonny died of a cerebral hemorrhage. Thus ended the life of a man, almost

who has been carrying a heavy load on his shoulders for half a century - to be a living legend and a symbol of a bygone era.

Two days after his death, Budyonny was solemnly buried near the Kremlin wall. In 1976, his ex-wife Olga Stefanovna died. Maria Vasilievna Budennaya survived her husband by almost 33 years and died in Moscow on October 13, 2006 at the age of 90. In honor of the marshal, the city of Budennovsk in the Stavropol Territory (the former Holy Cross, and later Prikumsk) was named. Today, this name has forever entered the Russian historical memory in connection with the death of many people as a result of the hostage-taking by the Chechen terrorist Shamil Basayev in 1995. And in total, not only four cities and seven districts, but 3215 collective farms bore the name of Budyonny (it's hard to say how many have survived today). The Military Order of Lenin of the Red Banner Academy of Communications was named after Marshal Budyonny. A memorial plaque was erected on the building of the headquarters of the Moscow Military District in memory of Budyonny's work as the commander of the Moscow Military District in 1937-1939. One of the new Moscow avenues was also named after him and has not yet been renamed. Perhaps this suggests that the name of the legendary marshal still means more to us than the names of other idols of the Soviet past.

## MAIN DATES OF THE LIFE AND ACTIVITY OF S. M. BUDENNY

- **1883, April 25** - was born on the farm Kozyurin in the family of a nonresident peasant Mikhail Ivanovich Budyonny and his wife Malanya Nikitichna.
- **1903, summer** - marriage to his first wife, Nadezhda. **September 15th** - drafted into the
- army. **1904–1905** - participation in the Russo-Japanese War as part of the 46th Cossack regiment.
- **1905-1906** - service in the Primorsky Dragoon Regiment in the village Razdolnoye near Vladivostok.

- **1907-1908** - studying at the St. Petersburg school of riders at the Higher Officer Cavalry School. **1908-1914** - service in the
- Primorsky Dragoon Regiment in  
as a regimental rider.
- **1908, May** - awarded the rank of junior non-commissioned officer.
- **September** - awarded the rank of senior non-commissioned officer.
- **1914, September** - called up from vacation to the 18th Seversky Dragoon Regiment named after the King of Denmark Christian IX to the post of platoon commander of the 5th squadron. The regiment as part of the Caucasian Cavalry Division took part in the battles on the Western Front and in Persia. **1917,**
- **November** - return to the village of Platovskaya. **1918, February**
- - at the district congress of Soviets in the village of Velikoknyazheskaya, he was elected head of the district land department. **February - June** - commander of an equestrian partisan detachment. **July - November** - assistant commander of a cavalry regiment. **1918, November - 1919, March**
- - assistant commander of the 1st Don Cavalry Brigade.
- **1919, April - June** - head of the 4th Cavalry Division. **March** - awarded the Order of the Red Banner. **April 26** -
- appointed commander of the cavalry corps. **November 17** - appointed commander of the First Cavalry Army. **1921, April** - appointed a member of the Revolutionary Military Council of the North Caucasian Military District, deputy commander of the district. **1923, March** - was awarded
- an honorary firearm and  
Order of the Red Banner; also awarded the second Order of the Red Banner. **September** - appointed
- assistant to the commander-in-chief of all the armed forces of the republic for cavalry and a member of the Revolutionary Military Council of the republic.
- **1924, January** - appointed inspector of the cavalry of the Red Army and Member of the Higher Attestation Commission of the Revolutionary Military Council of the USSR.
- **November** - wife Nadezhda Ivanovna committed suicide. **Autumn** -
- marriage to his second wife, Bolshoi Theater singer Olga Stefanovna Mikhailova. **1932, June** - graduated (as
- part of the Special Group) Military  
Academy named after M. V. Frunze.

- **1935, November 20** - awarded the title of Marshal of the Soviet Union.
- May**
- **1937** - took part in the trial of a group of arrested military leaders led by Marshal M. N. Tukhachevsky. **June** - appointed commander of the Moscow Military District and member of the Main Military Council of the People's Commissariat of Defense.
- August** - O. S. Mikhailov's wife was arrested on charges
- of espionage. Soon, Budyonny began a relationship with his future third wife, Maria Vasilievna. **1938, August 13** - the birth of his son Sergei. **1939, January** - appointed Deputy People's Commissar of
  - Defense. **September 6** - the birth of daughter Nina.
  - **1940, August** - appointed First Deputy People's Commissar of Defense.
  - **1941, June 23** - appointed member of the
  - Headquarters of the High Command (from July 10 - Headquarters of the High
  - Command, from August 8 - Headquarters of the Supreme High Command).
- 
- **June 25 - July 1** - Commander of the Army Group of the Reserve Main Command. **July 10** -
  - Appointed Commander-in-Chief of the South-Western Direction.
- September 11** -
- Removed from the post of Commander-in-Chief Yugo Western direction. **September**
  - **12** - appointed commander of the Reserve Front. **October 8** - relieved of the
  - post of commander of the Reserve Front. **November 7** - Commands a military parade in
  - Moscow. **1942, April** - appointed Commander-in-Chief of the
  - North
- Caucasian direction. **May** -
- appointed commander of the North Caucasian Front. **2**
- September** - removed from command of the North Caucasus direction and front. **January**
- **1943** - appointed commander of the Red Cavalry army. **1944** - the birth of a son, Mikhail.
  - **1945, February 17** - withdrawn from the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command; appointed a member of the Supreme Military Council of the People's Commissariat of Defense.

- **1947, March** - appointed Deputy Minister of Agriculture economy of the USSR on horse breeding and horse breeding.
- **May 1953** - relieved of the post of deputy minister agriculture and cavalry commander. **Mai** - Appointed
- Inspector of the Cavalry. **September** -
- relieved of the post of inspector of cavalry. **1954, October** -
- appointed Deputy Minister of Defense for special assignments.
- **1955** - appointed member of the DOSAAF
- presidium. **1958, February** - awarded the title of Hero of the
- Soviet Union. **1963, February** - awarded the title twice Hero of the
- Soviet Union. **1968, April** - awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet
- Union three times. **1973, October 26** - died in Moscow from the effects of a stroke.

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## ILLUSTRATIONS



For more than half a century, Marshal Budyonny was a living symbol of the Soviet military glory.



**The birthplace of Budyonny is the village of Platovskaya.**



**Parents of the future marshal: mother Malanya Nikitichna and father Mikhail Ivanovich.**



**CM. Budyonny with his mother and family. *Photo 1925***



**The chest of the brave non-commissioned officer Semyon Budyonny is decorated with four St. George's crosses.**



In the 18th Seversky Dragoon Regiment. *Photo 1915*



**S. M. Budyonny - commander of the red cavalry corps.  
Next to him is the chief of staff of the corps V. A. Pogrebov and the head of supply  
G. K. Sidenko (standing). *Photo 1919***



**Revolutionary Military Council of the First Cavalry: K. E. Voroshilov, S. M. Budyonny, E. A. Shchadenko.**



**Cavalry near Maykop. *Photo 1920***





**The commander of the Don Cossack Corps F. K. Mironov before being shot in the Balashov prison.**



**The Budyonny brothers Leonid and Emelyan are commanders of cavalry squadrons.**



**Chief of Staff of the First Cavalry S. A. Zotov.**



**Division chief I. R. Apanasenko.**



**Division chief O. I. Gorodovikov.**



**Head of division S. K. Timoshenko.**



**Brigade commander V.I. Book.**



**Brigade commander I. V. Tyulenev.**



**Meeting of the Revolutionary Military  
Council of the Cavalry. Center: K. E. Voroshilov, S. M. Budyonny, S. K. Minin.**



**G. I. Kotovsky.**



**Budyonny receives the "all-Russian headman"**



**In the intervals between battles, the cavalrymen read the Pravda newspaper.**



**Opponent of Budyonny - White General A. I. Denikin**



**The opponent of Budyonny is the white general K. K. Mamontov.**



**The opponent of Budyonny is the "Black Baron" P. P. Wrangel.**





**S. M. Budyonny M. V. Frunze and K. E. Voroshilov are planning operations on the Polish front.**



**The winner of Budyonny is the Polish Marshal Jozef Pilsudski.**



**Carts of the First Cavalry in Northern Tavria**



**Horsemen in Rostov-on-Don.**



**Victory parade of the First Cavalry. From left to right: S. M. Budyonny, K. E. Voroshilov, S. K. Minin, O. I. Gorodovikov. *November 1920***



**Nestor Makhno.**



**S. M. Budyonny in Sevastopol recaptured from the Whites.**



**Until the last years of his life, the marshal was excellent in the saddle.**



**S. M. Budyonny at the funeral of Lenin.**



**Budyonny and VV Kuibyshev at the stud farm in the Rostov region. *Photo 1930***



**Budyonny and Mongolian commander-in-chief X. Choibalsan. *Photo 1926***



**Budyonny and Gorky: a frank exchange of views on questions of literature.  
*Photo 1932***



**The author of "Cavalry" Isaac Babel.**





Every morning Budyonny began with exercises.



At the shooting range. *Photo 1931*



**S. M. Budyonny and I. V. Stalin with participants in the congress of collective farmers-drummers. *Photo 1935***



**Budyonny at the VII All-Union Congress of Soviets. *Photo 1935***



The first marshals of the Soviet Union. From left to right: M. N. Tukhachevsky, S. M. Budyonny, K. E. Voroshilov, V. K. Blyukher, A. I. Egorov. *Photo 1935*



At the All-Union Conference of the Wives of the Commanders of the Red Army. *Photo 1936*



**Budyonny's second wife, singer Olga Mikhailova, in L. Delibes' opera Lakme at the Bolshoi Theater.**



**Prison photo of O. S. Budenny-Mikhailova.**



**“If there is war tomorrow...” S. M. Budyonny at the exercises of the Moscow Military District.**



**Summer 1942. Budyonny commands troops in the North Caucasus.**



**S. M. Budyonny in Berlin. *May 1945***



**Budyonny with G.K. Zhukov, I.S. Konev and other military leaders at the XX Congress of the CPSU.**



**Marshal signs autographs on the newly published book of memoirs "The Path Traveled". *Photo 1958***



**S. M. Budyonny instructs the actor A. G. Vovsi - the performer of his role in the play Vs. Vishnevsky "The First Cavalry Army". *Photo 1957***



**The third wife of the marshal is Maria Vasilievna Budennaya.**



**S. M. Budyonny and his wife on vacation.**





**Daughter of Budyonny Nina.**



**"Family cavalry" Budyonny: son Misha, daughter Nina and Semyon Mikhailovich himself.**



Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet Leonid Brezhnev presents S. M. Budyonny with the second Gold Star medal. *Photo 1963*



At the XVI Congress of the All-Union Leninist Young Communist League, the marshal gives his saber as a gift to the Komsomol members. *Photo 1970*



**Surrounded by family. *Photo 1972***



The last chapters of memoirs. *Photo 1973*

## Notes

1. Independent newspaper. 2006. May <sup>^</sup><sub>—</sub>
12. 2. RGVA. F. YuZs/246. On. 1. D. 1. L. 7-17. <sub>—</sub>
- <sup>^</sup> 3. Lenin collection, XXXIV. S. 209. <sup>^</sup><sub>—</sub>

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